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VOL. CCCCXIV.

HYPATIA BY CHARLES KINGSLEY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

HYPATIA:

OR,

NEW FOES WITH AN OLD FACE.

BY

CHARLES KINGSLEY,

AUTHOR OF "TWO YEARS AGO," "ALTON LOCKE."

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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HYPATIA;

OR,

NEW FOES WITH AN OLD FACE.

VOL. II.

CHAPTER I.

Venus and Pallas.

As Hypatia was passing across to her lecture-room that afternoon, she was stopped midway by a procession of some twenty Goths and damsels, headed by Pelagia herself, in all her glory of jewels, shawls, and snow-white mule; while by her side rode the Amal, his long legs, like those of Gang-Rolf the Norseman, all but touching the ground, as he crushed down with his weight a delicate little barb, the best substitute to be found in Alexandria for the huge black chargers of his native land.

On they came, followed by a wondering and admiring mob, straight to the door of the Museum, and stopping, began to dismount, while their slaves took charge of the mules and horses.

There was no escape for Hypatia; pride forbad her to follow her own maidenly instinct, and to recoil among the crowd behind her; and in another moment the Amal had lifted Pelagia from her mule, and the

rival beauties of Alexandria stood, for the first time in their lives, face to face.

"May Athene befriend you this day, Hypatia!" said Pelagia, with her sweetest smile. "I have brought my guards to hear somewhat of your wisdom, this afternoon. I am anxious to know whether you can teach them anything more worth listening to than the foolish little songs which Aphrodite taught me, when she raised me from the sea-foam, as she rose herself, and named me Pelagia."

Hypatia drew herself up to her stateliest height, and returned no answer.

"I think my body-guard will well bear comparison with yours. At least they are princes, and the descendants of deities. So it is but fitting that they should enter before your provincials. Will you show them the way?"

No answer.

"Then I must do it myself. Come, Amal!" and she swept up the steps, followed by the Goths, who put the Alexandrians aside right and left, as if they had been children.

"Ah! treacherous wanton that you are!" cried a young man's voice out of the murmuring crowd. "After having plundered us of every coin out of which you could dupe us, here you are squandering our patrimonies on barbarians!"

"Give us back our presents, Pelagia," cried another, "and you are welcome to your herd of wild bulls!"

"And I will!" cried she, stopping suddenly; and clutching at her chains and bracelets, she was on the point of dashing them among the astonished crowd —

"There! take your gifts! Pelagia and her girls

scorn to be debtors to boys, while they are worshipped by men like these!"

But the Amal, who, luckily for the students, had not understood a word of this conversation, seized her arm, asking if she were mad.

"No, no!" panted she, inarticulate with passion. "Give me gold — every coin you have. — These wretches are twitting me with what they gave me before — before — Oh Amal, you understand me?" And she clung imploringly to his arm.

"Oh! Heroes! each of you throw his purse among these fellows! They say that we and our ladies are living on their spoils." And he tossed his purse among the crowd.

In an instant every Goth had followed his example: more than one following it up by dashing a bracelet or necklace into the face of some hapless philosophaster.

"I have no lady, my young friends," said old Wulf, in good enough Greek, "and owe you nothing; so I shall keep my money, as you might have kept yours; and as you might too, old Smid, if you had been as wise as I."

"Don't be stingy, Prince, for the honour of the Goths," said Smid laughing.

"If I take in gold, I pay in iron," answered Wulf, drawing half out of its sheath the huge broad blade, at the ominous brown stains of which the studentry recoiled; and the whole party swept into the empty lecture-room, and seated themselves at their ease in the front ranks.

Poor Hypatia! at first she determined not to lecture — then to send for Orestes — then to call on her

students to defend the sanctity of the Museum; but pride, as well as prudence, advised her better; to retreat would be to confess herself conquered — to disgrace philosophy — to lose her hold on the minds of all waverers. No! she would go on and brave everything, insults, even violence; and with trembling limbs and a pale cheek she mounted the tribune and began. ....

To her surprise and delight, however, her barbarian auditors were perfectly well-behaved. Pelagia in childish good-humour at her triumph, and perhaps, too, determined to show her contempt for her adversary by giving her every chance, enforced silence and attention, and checked the tittering of the girls, for a full half-hour. But at the end of that time the heavy breathing of the slumbering Amal, who had been twice awoke by her, resounded unchecked through the lecture-room, and deepened into a snore; for Pelagia herself was as fast asleep as he. But now another censor took upon himself the office of keeping order. Old Wulf, from the moment Hypatia had begun, had never taken his eyes off her face, and again and again the maiden's weak heart had been cheered, as she saw the smile of sturdy intelligence and honest satisfaction which twinkled over that scarred and bristly visage; while every now and then the grey beard wagged approval, until she found herself, long before the end of the oration, addressing herself straight to her new admirer.

At last it was over, and the students behind, who had sat meekly through it all, without the slightest wish to "upset" the intruders, who had so thoroughly upset them, rose hurriedly, glad enough to get safe out of so dangerous a neighbourhood. But to their astonishment, as well as to that of Hypatia, old Wulf rose also, and

stumbling along to the foot of the tribune, pulled out his purse, and laid it at Hypatia's feet.

"What is this?" asked she, half terrified at the approach of a figure more rugged and barbaric than she had ever beheld before.

"My fee for what I have heard to-day. You are a right noble maiden, and may Freya send you a husband worthy of you, and make you the mother of kings!"

And Wulf retired with his party.

Open homage to her rival, before her very face! Pelagia felt quite inclined to hate old Wulf.

But at least he was the only traitor. The rest of the Goths agreed unanimously that Hypatia was a very foolish person, who was wasting her youth and beauty in talking to donkey-riders; and Pelagia remounted her mule, and the Goths their horses, for a triumphal procession homeward.

And yet her heart was sad, even in her triumph. Right and wrong were ideas as unknown to her as they were to hundreds of thousands in her day. As far as her own consciousness was concerned, she was as destitute of a soul as the mule on which she rode. Gifted by nature with boundless frolic and good humour, wit and cunning, her Greek taste for the physically beautiful and graceful developed by long training, until she had become, without a rival, the most perfect pantomime, dancer, and musician who catered for the luxurious tastes of the Alexandrian theatres, she had lived since her childhood only for enjoyment and vanity, and wished for nothing more. But her new affection, or rather worship, for the huge manhood of her Gothic lover had awoke in her a new object — to keep him

— to live for him — to follow him to the ends of the earth, even if he tired of her, ill-used her, despised her. And slowly, day by day, Wulf's sneers had awakened in her a dread that perhaps the Amal might despise her. . . . . Why, she could not guess: but what sort of women were those Alrunas, of whom Wulf sung, of whom even the Amal and his men spoke with reverence, as something nobler, not only than her, but even than themselves? And what was it which Wulf had recognised in Hypatia which had bowed the stern and coarse old warrior before her in that public homage? . . . . It was not difficult to say what. . . . . But why should that make Hypatia or any one else attractive? . . . . And the poor little child of nature gazed in deep bewilderment at a crowd of new questions, as a butterfly might at the pages of the book on which it has settled, and was sad and discontented — not with herself, for was she not Pelagia the perfect? — but with these strange fancies which came into other people's heads. — Why should not every one be as happy as they could? And who knew better than she how to be happy, and to make others happy? . . . .

"Look at that old monk standing on the pavement, Amalric! Why does he stare so at me? Tell him to go away."

The person at whom she pointed, a delicate-featured old man, with a venerable white beard, seemed to hear her; for he turned with a sudden start, and then, to Pelagia's astonishment, put his hands before his face, and burst convulsively into tears.

"What does he mean by behaving in that way? Bring him here to me this moment! I will know!"

cried she, petulantly, catching at the new object, in order to escape from her own thoughts.

In a moment a Goth had led up the weeper, who came without demur to the side of Pelagia's mule.

"Why were you so rude as to burst out crying in my face?" asked she, petulantly.

The old man looked up sadly and tenderly, and answered in a low voice, meant only for her ear, —

"And how can I help weeping, when I see anything as beautiful as you are destined to the flames of hell for ever?"

"The flames of hell?" said Pelagia, with a shudder. "What for?"

"Do you not know?" asked the old man, with a look of sad surprise. "Have you forgotten what you are?"

"I? I never hurt a fly!"

"Why do you look so terrified, my darling? What have you been saying to her, you old villain?" and the Amal raised his whip.

"Oh! do not strike him. Come, come to-morrow, and tell me what you mean."

"No, we will have no monks within our doors, frightening silly women. Off, sirrah; and thank the lady that you have escaped with a whole skin." And the Amal caught the bridle of Pelagia's mule, and pushed forward, leaving the old man gazing sadly after them.

But the beautiful sinner was evidently not the object which had brought the old monk of the desert into a neighbourhood so strange and ungenial to his habits; for, recovering himself in a few moments, he hurried on to the door of the Museum, and there planted him-

self, scanning earnestly the faces of the passers-out, and meeting, of course, with his due share of student ribaldry.

"Well, old cat, and what mouse are you on the watch for, at the hole's mouth here?"

"Just come inside, and see whether the mice will not singe your whiskers for you." . . . .

"Here is my mouse, gentlemen," answered the old monk, with a bow and a smile, as he laid his hand on Philammon's arm, and presented to his astonished eyes the delicate features and high retreating forehead of Arsenius.

"My father!" cried the boy, in the first impulse of affectionate recognition; and then — he had expected some such meeting all along, but now that it was come at last, he turned pale as death. The students saw his emotion.

"Hands off, old Heautontimoroumenos! He belongs to our guild now! Monks have no more business with sons than with wives. Shall we hustle him for you, Philammon?"

"Take care how you show off, gentlemen; the Goths are not yet out of hearing!" answered Philammon, who was learning fast how to give a smart answer; and then, fearing the temper of the young dandies, and shrinking from the notion of any insult to one so reverend and so beloved as Arsenius, he drew the old man gently away, and walked up the street with him in silence, dreading what was coming.

"And are these your friends?"

"Heaven forbid! I have nothing in common with such animals but flesh and blood, and a seat in the lecture-room!"

"Of the heathen woman?"

Philammon, after the fashion of young men in fear, rushed desperately into the subject himself just because he dreaded Arsenius's entering on it quietly.

"Yes, of the heathen woman. Of course you have seen Cyril before you came hither?"

"I have, and —"

"And," went on Philammon, interrupting him, "you have been told every lie which prurience, stupidity, and revenge can invent. That I have trampled on the cross — sacrificed to all the deities in the pantheon — and probably" — (and he blushed scarlet) — "that that purest and holiest of beings — who, if she were not what people call a pagan, would be, and deserves to be, worshipped as the queen of saints — that she — and I" — and he stopped.

"Have I said that I believed what I may have heard?"

"No — and therefore, as they are all simple and sheer falsehoods, there is no more to be said on the subject. Not that I shall not be delighted to answer any questions of yours, my dearest father —"

"Have I asked any, my child?"

"No. So we may as well change the subject for the present," — and he began overwhelming the old man with inquiries about himself, Pambo, and each and all of the inhabitants of the Laura: to which Arsenius, to the boy's infinite relief, answered cordially and minutely, and even vouchsafed a smile at some jest of Philammon's on the contrast between the monks of Nitria and those of Scetis.

Arsenius was too wise not to see well enough what all this flippancy meant; and too wise, also, not to

know that Philammon's version was probably quite as near the truth as Peter's and Cyril's; but for reasons of his own, merely replied by an affectionate look, and a compliment to Philammon's growth.

"And yet you seem thin and pale, my boy."

"Study," said Philammon, "study. One cannot burn the midnight oil without paying some penalty for it. . . . However, I am richly repaid already; I shall be more so hereafter."

"Let us hope so. But who are those Goths whom I passed in the streets just now?"

"Ah! my father," said Philammon, glad in his heart of any excuse to turn the conversation, and yet half uneasy and suspicious at Arsenius's evident determination to avoid the very object of his visit. "It must have been you, then, whom I saw stop and speak to Pelagia at the farther end of the street. What words could you possibly have had wherewith to honour such a creature?"

"God knows. Some secret sympathy touched my heart. . . . . Alas! poor child! But how come you to know her?"

"All Alexandria knows the shameless abomination," interrupted a voice at their elbow — none other than that of the little porter, who had been dogging and watching the pair the whole way, and could no longer restrain his longing to meddle. "And well it had been for many a rich young man had old Miriam never brought her over, in an evil day, from Athens hither."

"Miriam?"

"Yes, monk; a name not unknown, I am told, in palaces as well as in slave-markets."

"An evil-eyed old Jewess?"

"A Jewess she is, as her name might have informed you — and as for her eyes, I consider them, or used to do so, of course — for her injured nation have been long expelled from Alexandria by your fanatic tribe — as altogether divine and demoniac, let the base imagination of monks call them what it likes."

"But how did you know this Pelagia, my son? She is no fit company for such as you."

Philammon told, honestly enough, the story of his Nile journey, and Pelagia's invitation to him.

"You did not surely accept it?"

"Heaven forbid that Hypatia's scholar should so degrade himself!"

Arsenius shook his head sadly.

"You would not have had me go?"

"No, boy. But how long hast thou learned to call thyself Hypatia's scholar, or to call it a degradation to visit the most sinful, if thou mightest thereby bring back a lost lamb to the Good Shepherd? Nevertheless, thou art too young for such employment — and she meant to tempt thee, doubtless."

"I do not think it. She seemed struck by my talking Athenian Greek, and having come from Athens."

"And how long since she came from Athens?" said Arsenius, after a pause. "Who knows?"

"Just after it was sacked by the barbarians," said the little porter, who, beginning to suspect a mystery, was peaking and peering like an excited parrot. "The old dame brought her hither, among a cargo of captive boys and girls."

"The time agrees. . . . . Can this Miriam be found?"

"A sapient and courteous question for a monk to ask! Do you not know that Cyril has expelled all Jews four months ago?"

"True, true. . . . Alas!" said the old man to himself, "how little the rulers of this world guess their own power! They move a finger carelessly, and forget that that finger may crush to death hundreds whose names they never heard — and every soul of them as precious in God's sight as Cyril's own."

"What is the matter, my father?" asked Philammon. "You seem deeply moved about this woman." . . . .

"And she is Miriam's slave?"

"Her freedwoman this four years past," said the porter. "The good lady — for reasons doubtless excellent in themselves, though not altogether patent to the philosophic mind — thought good to turn her loose on the Alexandrian republic, to seek what she might devour."

"God help her! And you are certain that Miriam is not in Alexandria?"

The little porter turned very red, and Philammon did so likewise; but he remembered his promise, and kept it.

"You both know something of her, I can see. You cannot deceive an old statesman, sir!" — turning to the little porter with a look of authority — "poor monk though he be now. If you think fitting to tell me what you know, I promise you that neither she nor you shall be losers by your confidence in me. If not, I shall find means to discover."

Both stood silent.

"Philammon, my son! and art thou too in league

against — no, not against me; against thyself, poor misguided boy?"

"Against myself?"

"Yes — I have said it. But unless you will trust me, I cannot trust you."

"I have promised."

"And I, sir statesman, or monk, or both, or neither, have sworn by the immortal gods!" said the porter, looking very big.

Arsenius paused.

"There are those who hold that an oath by an idol, being nothing, is of itself void. I do not agree with them. If thou thinkest it sin to break thine oath, to thee it is sin. And for thee, my poor child, thy promise is sacred, were it made to Iscariot himself. But hear me. Can either of you, by asking this woman, be so far absolved as to give me speech of her? Tell her — that is, if she be in Alexandria, which God grant — all that has passed between us here, and tell her, on the solemn oath of a Christian, that Arsenius, whose name she knows well, will neither injure nor betray her. Will you do this?"

"Arsenius?" said the little porter, with a look of mingled awe and pity.

The old man smiled. "Arsenius, who was once called the Father of the Emperors. Even she will trust that name."

"I will go this moment, sir; I will fly!" and off rushed the little porter.

"The little fellow forgets," said Arsenius with a smile, "to how much he has confessed already, and how easy it were now to trace him to the old hag's lair..... Philammon, my son .... I have many tears to weep

over thee — but they must wait a while. I have thee safe now," and the old man clutched his arm. "Thou wilt not leave thy poor old father? Thou wilt not desert me for the heathen woman?"

"I will stay with you, I promise you, indeed! if — if you will not say unjust things of her."

"I will speak evil of no one, accuse no one, but myself. I will not say one harsh word to thee, my poor boy. But listen now! Thou knowest that thou camest from Athens. Knowest thou that it was I who brought thee hither?"

"You?"

"I, my son: but when I brought thee to the Laura, it seemed right that thou, as the son of a noble gentleman, shouldest hear nothing of it. But tell me: Dost thou recollect father or mother, brother or sister; or anything of thy home in Athens?"

"No!"

"Thanks be to God. But Philammon, if thou hadst had a sister — hush! And if — I only say if" —

"A sister!" interrupted Philammon. "Pelagia?"

"God forbid, my son! But a sister thou hadst once — some three years older than thee, she seemed."

"What? did you know her?"

"I saw her but once — on one sad day. — Poor children both! I will not sadden you by telling you where and how."

"And why did you not bring her hither with me? You surely had not the heart to part us?"

"Ah, my son, what right had an old monk with a fair young girl? And, indeed, even had I had the courage, it would have been impossible. There were others, richer than I, to whose covetousness her youth

and beauty seemed a precious prize. When I saw her last, she was in company with an ancient Jewess. Heaven grant that this Miriam may prove to be the one.

"And I have a sister!" gasped Philammon, his eyes bursting with tears. "We must find her! You will help me? — Now — this moment! There is nothing else to be thought of, spoken of, done, henceforth, till she is found!"

"Ah, my son, my son! Better, better, perhaps, to leave her in the hands of God! What if she were dead? To discover that, would but be to discover needless sorrow. And what if — God grant that it be not so! — she had only a name to live, and were dead, worse than dead, in sinful pleasure? —"

"We would save her, or die trying to save her! Is it not enough for me that she is my sister?"

Arsenius shook his head. He little knew the strange new light and warmth which his words had poured in upon the young heart beside him. . . . . "A sister!" What mysterious virtue was there in that simple word, which made Philammon's brain reel and his heart throb madly? A sister! not merely a friend, an equal, a helpmate, given by God himself, for loving whom none, not even a monk, could blame him. — Not merely something delicate, weak, beautiful — for of course she must be beautiful — whom he might cherish, guide, support, deliver, die for, and find death delicious. Yes — all that, and more than that, lay in the sacred word. For those divided and partial notions had flitted across his mind too rapidly to stir such passion as moved him now; even the hint of her sin and danger had been heard heedlessly, if heard at all. It was the

word itself which bore its own message, its own spell, to the heart of the fatherless and motherless foundling, as he faced for the first time the deep everlasting, divine reality of kindred. . . . . A sister! of his own flesh and blood — born of the same father, the same mother — his, his, for ever! How hollow and fleeting seemed all "spiritual sonships," "spiritual daughterhoods," inventions of the changing fancy, the wayward will of man! Arsenius — Pambo — ay, Hypatia herself — what were they to him now? Here was a real relationship. . . . . A sister! What else was worth caring for upon earth?

"And she was at Athens when Pelagia was" — he cried at last — "perhaps knew her — let us go to Pelagia herself!"

"Heaven forbid!" said Arsenius. "We must wait at least till Miriam's answer comes."

"I can show you her house at least in the mean while; and you can go in yourself when you will. I do not ask to enter. Come! I feel certain that my finding her is in some way bound up with Pelagia. Had I not met her on the Nile, had you not met her in the street, I might never have heard that I had a sister. And if she went with Miriam, Pelagia must know her — she may be in that very house at this moment!"

Arsenius had his reasons for suspecting that Philammon was but too right. But he contented himself with yielding to the boy's excitement, and set off with him in the direction of the dancer's house.

They were within a few yards of the gate, when hurried footsteps behind them, and voices calling them by name, made them turn; and behold, evidently to the

disgust of Arsenius as much as Philammon himself, Peter the Reader and a large party of monks!

Philammon's first impulse was to escape: Arsenius himself caught him by the arm, and seemed inclined to hurry.

"No!" thought the youth, "am I not a free man, and a philosopher?" and facing round, he awaited the enemy.

"Ah, young apostate: So you have found him, reverend and ill-used sir. Praised be Heaven for this rapid success!"

"My good friend," asked Arsenius, in a trembling voice, "what brings you here?"

"Heaven forbid that I should have allowed your sanctity and age to go forth, without some guard against the insults and violence of this wretched youth and his profligate companions. We have been following you afar off all the morning, with hearts full of filial solicitude."

"Many thanks; but indeed your kindness has been superfluous. My son here, from whom I have met with nothing but affection, and whom, indeed, I believe far more innocent than report declared him, is about to return peaceably with me. Are you not, Philammon?"

"Alas! my father," said Philammon, with an effort, "how can I find courage to say it? — but I cannot return with you."

"Cannot return?"

"I vowed that I would never again cross that threshold till" —

"And Cyril does. He bade me, indeed he bade me, assure you that he would receive you back as a son, and forgive and forget all the past."

"Forgive and forget? That is my part — not his. Will he right me against that tyrant and his crew? Will he proclaim me openly to be an innocent and persecuted man, unjustly beaten and driven forth for obeying his own commands? Till he does that, I shall not forget that I am a free man.

"A free man?" said Peter, with an unpleasant smile; "that remains to be proved, my gay youth and will need more evidence than that smart philosophic cloak and those well-curled locks which you have adopted since I saw you last."

"Remains to be proved?"

Arsenius made an imploring gesture to Peter to be silent.

"Nay, sir. As I foretold to you, this one way alone remains; the blame of it, if there be blame, must rest on the unhappy youth whose perversity renders it necessary."

"For God's sake, spare me!" cried the old man, dragging Peter aside, while Philammon stood astonished, divided between indignation and vague dread.

"Did I not tell you again and again that I never could bring myself to call a Christian man my slave? And him, above all, my spiritual son?"

"And, most reverend sir, whose zeal is only surpassed by your tenderness and mercy, did not the holy patriarch assure you that your scruples were groundless? Do you think that either he or I can have less horror than you have of slavery in itself? Heaven forbid! But when an immortal soul is at stake — when a lost lamb is to be brought back to the fold — surely you may employ the authority which the law gives you for the salvation of that precious charge

committed to you? What could be more conclusive than his Holiness's argument this morning? 'Christians are bound to obey the laws of this world for conscience sake, even though, in the abstract, they may disapprove of them, and deny their authority. Then, by parity of reasoning, it must be lawful for them to take the advantage which those same laws offer them, when by so doing the glory of God may be advanced.'"

Arsenius still hung back, with eyes brimming with tears; but Philammon himself put an end to the parley.

"What is the meaning of all this? Are you, too, in a conspiracy against me? Speak, Arsenius!"

"This is the meaning of it, blinded sinner!" cried Peter. "That you are by law the slave of Arsenius, lawfully bought with his money, in the city of Ravenna; and that he has the power, and, as I trust, for the sake of your salvation, the will also, to compel you to accompany him."

Philammon recoiled across the pavement, and with eyes flashing defiance. A slave! The light of heaven grew black to him. . . . . Oh, that Hypatia might never know his shame! Yet it was impossible. Too dreadful to be true. . . . .

"You lie!" almost shrieked he. "I am the son of a noble citizen of Athens. Arsenius told me so, but this moment, with his own lips!"

"Ay, but he bought you — bought you in the public market; and he can prove it!"

"Hear me, hear me, my son!" cried the old man, springing toward him. Philammon, in his fury, mistook the gesture, and thrust him fiercely back.

"Your son? — your slave! Do not insult the name

of son by applying it to me. Yes, sir: your slave in body, but not in soul! Ay, seize me — drag home the fugitive — scourge him — brand him — chain him in the mill, if you can; but even for that the free heart has a remedy. If you will not let me live as a philosopher, you shall see me die like one!"

"Seize the fellow, my brethren!" cried Peter, while Arsenius, utterly unable to restrain either party, hid his face and wept.

"Wretches!" cried the boy; "you shall never take me alive, while I have teeth or nails left. Treat me as a brute beast, and I will defend myself as such!"

"Out of the way there, rascals! Place for the prefect! What are you squabbling about here, you unmannerly monks?" shouted peremptory voices from behind. The crowd parted, and disclosed the apparitors of Orestes, who followed in his robes of office.

A sudden hope flashed before Philammon, and in an instant he had burst through the mob, and was clinging to the prefect's chariot.

"I am a free-born Athenian, whom these monks wish to kidnap back into slavery! I claim your protection!"

"And you shall have it, right or wrong, my handsome fellow. By Heaven, you are much too good-looking to be made a monk of! What do you mean, you villains, by attempting to kidnap free men? Is it not enough for you to lock up every mad girl whom you can dupe, but you must —"

"His master is here present, your Excellency, who will swear to the purchase."

"Or to anything else for the glory of God. Out of the way! And take care, you tall scoundrel, that I do

not get a handle against you. You have been one of my marked men for many a month. Off!"

"His master demands the rights of the law as a Roman citizen," said Peter, pushing forward Arsenius.

"If he be a Roman citizen, let him come and make his claim at the tribune to-morrow, in legal form. But I would have you remember, ancient sir, that I shall require you to prove your citizenship, before we proceed to the question of purchase."

"The law does not demand that," quoth Peter.

"Knock that fellow down, apparitor!" Whereat Peter vanished, and an ominous growl rose from the mob of monks.

"What am I to do, most noble sir?" said Philammon.

"Whatever you like, till the third hour to-morrow — if you are fool enough to appear at the tribune. If you will take my advice, you will knock down these fellows right and left, and run for your life." And Orestes drove on.

Philammon saw that it was his only chance, and did so; and in another minute he found himself rushing headlong into the archway of Pelagia's house, with a dozen monks at his heels.

As luck would have it, the outer gates, at which the Goths had just entered, were still open; but the inner ones which led into the court beyond were fast. He tried them, but in vain. There was an open door in the wall on his right: he rushed through it into a long range of stables, and into the arms of Wulf and

Smid, who were unsaddling and feeding, like true warriors, their own horses.

"Souls of my fathers!" shouted Smid, "here's our young monk come back! What brings you here head over heels in this way, young curly-pate?"

"Save me from those wretches!" pointing to the monks, who were peeping into the doorway.

Wulf seemed to understand it all in a moment; for, snatching up a heavy whip, he rushed at the foe, and with a few tremendous strokes cleared the doorway, and shut-to the door.

Philammon was going to explain and thank, but Smid stopped his mouth.

"Never mind, young one, you are our guest now. Come in, and you shall be as welcome as ever. See what comes of running away from us at first."

"You do not seem to have benefited much by leaving me for the monks," said old Wulf. "Come in by the inner door. Smid! go and turn those monks out of the gateway."

But the mob, after battering the door for a few minutes, had yielded to the agonized entreaties of Peter, who assured them that if those incarnate fiends once broke out upon them, they would not leave a Christian alive in Alexandria. So it was agreed to leave a few to watch for Philammon's coming out; and the rest, balked of their prey, turned the tide of their wrath against the prefect, and rejoined the mass of their party, who were still hanging round his chariot, ready for mischief.

In vain the hapless shepherd of the people at-

tempted to drive on. The apparitors were frightened, and hung back; and without their help it was impossible to force the horses through the mass of tossing arms and beards in front. The matter was evidently growing serious.

"The bitterest ruffians in all Nitria, your Excellency," whispered one of the guards, with a pale face; "and two hundred of them, at the least. The very same set, I will be sworn, who nearly murdered Dioscuros."

"If you will not allow me to proceed, my holy brethren," said Orestes, trying to look collected, "perhaps it will not be contrary to the canons of the church if I turn back. Leave the horses' heads alone. Why, in God's name, what do you want?"

"Do you fancy we have forgotten Hieracas?" cried a voice from the rear; and at that name, yell upon yell arose, till the mob, gaining courage from its own noise, burst out into open threats. "Revenge for the blessed martyr, Hieracas!" "Revenge for the wrongs of the church!" "Down with the friend of Heathens, Jews, and Barbarians!" "Down with the favourite of Hypatia!" "Tyrant!" "Butcher!"

And the last epithet so smote the delicate fancy of the crowd, that a general cry arose of "Kill the butcher!" and one furious monk attempted to clamber into the chariot. An apparitor tore him down, and was dragged to the ground in his turn. The monks closed in. The guards, finding the enemy number ten to their one, threw down their weapons in a panic, and vanished; and in another minute the hopes of Hypatia and the gods would have been lost for ever, and

Alexandria robbed of the blessing of being ruled b the most finished gentleman south of the Mediterranea had it not been for unexpected succour; of which it wi be time enough, considering who and what is in dange to speak in a future chapter.

CHAPTER II.

A Stray Gleam.

THE last blue headland of Sardinia was fading fast on the north-west horizon, and a steady breeze bore before it innumerable ships, the wrecks of Heraclian's armament, plunging and tossing impatiently in their desperate homeward race toward the coast of Africa. Far and wide, under a sky of cloudless blue, the white sails glittered on the glittering sea, as gaily now, above their loads of shame and disappointment, terror and pain, as when, but one short month before, they bore with them only wild hopes and gallant daring. And who can calculate the sum of misery in that hapless flight? .... And yet it was but one, and that one of the least known and most trivial, of the tragedies of that age of woe; one petty death-spasm among the unnumbered throes which were shaking to dissolution the Babylon of the West. Her time had come. .... Even as Saint John beheld her in his vision, by agony after agony, she was rotting to her well-earned doom. Tyrannizing it luxuriously over all nations, she had sat upon the mystic beast — building her power on the brute animal appetites of her dupes and slaves: but she had duped herself even more than them. She was finding out by bitter lessons that it was "to the beast," and not to her, that her vassal kings of the earth had been giving their power and strength; and the ferocity

and lust which she had pampered so cunningly in them, had become her curse and her destruction. . . . . Drunk with the blood of the saints; blinded by her own conceit and jealousy to the fact that she had been crushing and extirpating out of her empire for centuries past all which was noble, purifying, regenerative, divine, she sat impotent and doting, the prey of every fresh adventurer, the slave of her own slaves. . . . . "And the kings of the earth who had sinned with her, hated the harlot, and made her desolate and naked, and devoured her flesh, and burned her with fire. For God had put into their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled." . . . . Everywhere sensuality, division, hatred, treachery, cruelty, uncertainty, terror . . . . the vials of God's wrath poured out. . . . Where was to be the end of it all? asked every man of his neighbour, generation after generation; and received for answer only, "It is better to die than to live."

And yet, in one ship out of that sad fleet, there was peace; peace amid shame and terror; amid the groans of the wounded, and the sighs of the starving; amid all but blank despair. The great triremes and quinqueremes rushed onward past the lagging transports, careless, in the mad race for safety, that they were leaving the greater number of their comrades defenceless in the rear of the flight; but from one little fishing-craft alone no base entreaties, no bitter execrations greeted the passing flash and roll of their mighty oars. One after another, day by day, they came rushing up out of the northern offing, each like a huge hundred-footed dragon, panting and quivering, as if

with terror, at every loud pulse of its oars, hurling the wild water right and left with the mighty share of its beak, while from the bows some gorgon or chimæra, elephant or boar stared out with brazen eyes toward the coast of Africa, as if it too, like the human beings which it carried, was dead to every care but that of dastard flight. Past they rushed, one after another; and off the poop some shouting voice chilled all hearts for a moment, with the fearful news that the Emperor's Neapolitan fleet was in full chase..... And the soldiers on board that little vessel looked silently and steadfastly into the silent steadfast face of the old Prefect, and Victoria saw him shudder, and turn his eyes away — and stood up among the rough fighting men, like a goddess, and cried aloud that "The Lord would protect his own;" and they believed her, and were still; till many days and many ships were past, and the little fishing-craft, outstripped even by the transports and merchantmen, as it strained and crawled along before its single square-sail, was left alone upon the sea.

And where was Raphael Aben-Ezra?

He was sitting, with Bran's head between his knees, at the door of a temporary awning in the vessel's stern, which shielded the wounded men from sun and spray; and as he sat he could hear from within the tent the gentle voices of Victoria and her brother, as they tended the sick like ministering angels, or read to them words of divine hope and comfort — in which his homeless heart felt that he had no share. . . . .

"As I live, I would change places now with any one of those poor mangled ruffians, to have that voice speaking such words to me . . . and to believe them."

. . . And he went on perusing the manuscript which he held in his hand.

* * * * *

"Well!" he sighed to himself after a while, "at least it is the most complimentary, not to say hopeful, view of our destinies with which I have met since I threw away my nurse's belief that the seed of David was fated to conquer the whole earth, and set up a second Roman Empire at Jerusalem, only worse than the present one, in that the devil of superstition and bigotry would be added to those of tyranny and rapine."

A hand was laid on his shoulder, and a voice asked, "And what may this so hopeful view be?"

"Ah! my dear General!" said Raphael, looking up. "I have a poor bill of fare whereon to exercise my culinary powers this morning. Had it not been for that shark who was so luckily deluded last night, I should have been reduced to the necessity of stewing my friend the fat decurion's big boots."

"They would have been savoury enough, I will warrant, after they had passed under your magical hand."

"It is a comfort, certainly, to find that after all one did learn something useful in Alexandria! So I will even go forward at once, and employ my artistic skill."

"Tell me first what it was about which I heard you just now soliloquizing, as so hopeful a view of some matter or other?"

"Honestly — if you will neither betray me to your son and daughter, nor consider me as having in anywise committed myself — it was Paul of Tarsus' notion

of the history and destinies of our stiff-necked nation. See what your daughter has persuaded me into reading!" And he held up a manuscript of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

"It is execrable Greek. But it is sound philosophy, I cannot deny. He knows Plato better than all the ladies and gentlemen in Alexandria put together, if my opinion on the point be worth having."

"I am a plain soldier, and no judge on that point, sir. He may or may not know Plato; but I am right sure that he knows God."

"Not too fast," said Raphael, with a smile. "You do not know, perhaps, that I have spent the last ten years of my life among men who professed the same knowledge?"

"Augustine, too, spent the ten best years of his life among such; and yet he is now combating the very errors which he once taught."

"Having found, he fancies, something better?"

"Having found it, most truly. But you must talk to him yourself, and argue the matter over, with one who can argue. To me such questions are an unknown land."

"Well . . . Perhaps I may be tempted to do even that. At least, a thoroughly converted philosopher — for poor dear Synesius is half heathen still, I often fancy, and hankers after the wisdom of the Egyptian — will be a curious sight; and to talk with so famous and so learned a man would always be a pleasure; but to argue with him, or any other human being, none whatsoever."

"Why, then?"

"My dear sir, I am sick of syllogisms, and proba-

bilities, and pros and contras. What do I care if, on weighing both sides, the nineteen pounds' weight of questionable arguments against, are overbalanced by the twenty pounds' weight of equally questionable arguments for? Do you not see that my belief of the victorious proposition will be proportioned to the one overbalancing pound only, while the whole other nineteen will go for nothing?"

"I really do not."

"Happy are you, then. I do, from many a sad experience. No, my worthy sir. I want a faith past arguments; one which, whether I can prove it or not to the satisfaction of the lawyers, I believe to my own satisfaction, and act on it as undoubtingly and unreasoningly as I do upon my own newly rediscovered personal identity. I don't want to possess a faith. I want a faith which will possess me. And if I ever arrived at such a one, believe me, it would be by some such practical demonstration as this very tent has given me."

"This tent?"

"Yes, sir, this tent; within which I have seen you and your children lead a life of deeds as new to me the Jew, as they would be to Hypatia the Gentile. I have watched you for many a day, and not in vain. When I saw you, an experienced officer, encumber your flight with wounded men, I was only surprised. But since I have seen you, and your daughter, and, strangest of all, your gay young Alcibiades of a son, starving yourselves to feed those poor ruffians — performing for them, day and night, the offices of menial slaves — comforting them, as no man ever comforted me — blaming no one but yourselves, caring for every

one but yourselves, sacrificing nothing but yourselves; and all this without hope of fame or reward, or dream of appeasing the wrath of any god or goddess, but simply because you thought it right .... When I saw that, sir, and more which I have seen; and when, reading in this book here, I found most unexpectedly those very grand moral rules which you were practising, seeming to spring unconsciously, as natural results, from the great thoughts, true or false, which had preceded them; then, sir, I began to suspect that the creed which could produce such deeds as I have watched within the last few days, might have on its side not merely a slight preponderance of probabilities, but what we Jews used once to call, when we believed in it — or in anything — the mighty power of God."

And as he spoke, he looked into the prefect's face with the look of a man wrestling in some deadly struggle; so intense and terrible was the earnestness of his eye, that even the old soldier shrank before it.

"And therefore," he went on, "therefore, sir, beware of your own actions, and of your children's. If, by any folly or baseness, such as I have seen in every human being whom I ever met as yet, upon this accursed stage of fools, you shall crush my new-budding hope that there is something somewhere which will make me what I know that I ought to be, and can be — If you shall crush that, I say, by any misdoing of yours, you had better have been the murderer of my firstborn; with such a hate — a hate which Jews alone can feel — will I hate you and yours."

"God help us and strengthen us!" said the old warrior, in a tone of noble humility.

"And now," said Raphael, glad to change the sub-

ject, after this unwonted outburst, "we must once more seriously consider whether it is wise to hold on our present course. If you return to Carthage, or to Hippo —"

"I shall be beheaded."

"Most assuredly. And how much soever you may consider such an event a gain to yourself, yet for the sake of your son and your daughter —"

"My dear sir," interrupted the Prefect, "you mean kindly. But do not, do not tempt me. By the count's side I have fought for thirty years, and by his side I will die, as I deserve."

"Victorius! Victoria!" cried Raphael; "help me! Your father," he went on, as they came out from the tent, "is still decided on losing his own head, and throwing away ours, by going to Carthage."

"For my sake — for our sakes — father!" cried Victoria, clinging to him.

"And for my sake, also, most excellent, sir," said Raphael, smiling quietly. "I have no wish to be so uncourteous as to urge any help which I may have seemed to afford you. But I hope that you will recollect that I have a life to lose, and that it is hardly fair of you to imperil it, as you intend to do. If you could help or save Heraclian, I should be dumb at once. But now, for a mere point of honour to destroy fifty good soldiers, who know not their right hands from their left — Shall I ask their opinion?"

"Will you raise a mutiny against me, sir?" asked the old man, sternly.

"Why not mutiny against Philip drunk, in behalf of Philip sober? But really, I will obey you .... only you must obey us. .... What is Hesiod's de-

finition of the man who will neither counsel himself nor be counselled by his friends? . . . . Have you no trusty acquaintances in Cyrenaica, for instance?"

The Prefect was silent.

"Oh, hear us, my father! Why not go to Euodius? He is your old comrade — a well-wisher, too, to this . . . . this expedition. . . . . And recollect, Augustine must be there now. He was about to sail for Berenice, in order to consult Synesius and the Pentapolitan bishops, when we left Carthage."

And at the name of Augustine the old man paused.

"Augustine will be there; true. And this our friend must meet him. And thus at least I should have his advice. If he thinks it my duty to return to Carthage, I can but do so, after all. But the soldiers?"

"Excellent sir," said Raphael, "Synesius and the Pentapolitan landlords — who can hardly call their lives their own, thanks to the Moors — will be glad enough to feed and pay them, or any other brave fellows with arms in their hands, at this moment. And my friend Victorius, here, will enjoy, I do not doubt, a little wild campaigning against marauding black-amoors."

The old man bowed silently. The battle was won.

The young tribune, who had been watching his father's face with the most intense anxiety, caught at the gesture, and hurrying forward, announced the change of plan to the soldiery. It was greeted with a shout of joy, and in another five minutes the sails were about, the rudders shifted, and the ship on her way toward the western point of Sicily, before a steady north-west breeze.

"Ah!" cried Victoria, delighted. "And now you

will see Augustine! You must promise me to talk to him!"

"This, at least, I will promise, that whatsoever the great sophist shall be pleased to say shall meet with a patient hearing from a brother sophist. Do not be angry at the term. Recollect that I am somewhat tired, like my ancestor Solomon, of wisdom and wise men, having found it only too like madness and folly. And you cannot surely expect me to believe in man, while I do not yet believe in God?"

Victoria sighed. "I will not believe you. Why always pretend to be worse than you are?"

"That kind souls like you may be spared the pain of finding me worse than I seem .... There, let us say no more; except that I heartily wish that you would hate me!"

"Shall I try?"

"That must be my work, I fear, not yours. However, I shall give you good cause enough before long doubt it not."

Victoria sighed again, and retired into the tent to nurse the sick.

"And now, sir," said the Prefect, turning to Raphael and his son; "do not mistake me. I may have been weak, as worn-out and hopeless men are wont to be; but do not think of me as one who has yielded to adversity in fear for his own safety. As God hears me, I desire nothing better than to die; and I only turn out of my course on the understanding that if Augustine so advise, my children hold me free to return to Carthage and meet my fate. All I pray for is, that my life may be spared until I can place my dear child in the safe shelter of a nunnery."

"A nunnery?"

"Yes, indeed; I have intended, ever since her birth, to dedicate her to the service of God. And in such times as these, what better lot for a defenceless girl?"

"Pardon me!" said Raphael; "but I am too dull to comprehend what benefit or pleasure your Deity will derive from the celibacy of your daughter. . . . Except, indeed, on one supposition, which, as I have some faint remnants of reverence and decency reawakening in me just now, I must leave to be uttered only by the pure lips of sexless priests."

"You forget, sir, that you are speaking to a Christian."

"I assure you, no! I had certainly been forgetting it till the last two minutes, in your very pleasant and rational society. There is no danger henceforth of my making so silly a mistake."

"Sir!" said the Prefect, reddening at the undisguised contempt of Raphael's manner. . . . . "When you know a little more of St. Paul's Epistles, you will cease to insult the opinions and feelings of those who obey them, by sacrificing their most precious treasures to God."

"Oh, it is Paul of Tarsus, then, who gives you the advice? I thank you for informing me of the fact; for it will save me the trouble of any future study of his works. Allow me, therefore, to return by your hands this manuscript of his, with many thanks from me to that daughter of yours, by whose perpetual imprisonment you intend to give pleasure to your Deity. Henceforth the less communication which passes between me and any member of your family, the better." And he turned away.

"But, my dear sir!" said the honest soldier, really chagrined, "you must not! — we owe you too much, and love you too well to part thus for the caprice of a moment. If any word of mine has offended you — forget it, and forgive me, I beseech you!" and he caught both Raphael's hands in his own.

"My very dear sir," answered the Jew, quietly; "let me ask the same forgiveness of you; and believe me, for the sake of past pleasant passages, I shall not forget my promise about the mortgage. . . . . But — here we must part. To tell you the truth, I half-an-hour ago was fearfully near becoming neither more nor less than a Christian. I had actually deluded myself into the fancy that the Deity of the Galileans might be, after, the God of our old Hebrew forefathers — of Adam and Eve, of Abraham and David, and of the rest who believed that children and the fruit of the womb were an heritage and gift which cometh of the Lord — and that Paul was right — actually right — in his theory that the Church was the development and fulfilment of our old national polity. . . . . I must thank you for opening my eyes to a mistake which, had I not been besotted for the moment, every monk and nun would have contradicted by the mere fact of their existence, and reserve my nascent faith for some Deity who takes no delight in seeing his creatures stultify the primary laws of their being. Farewell!"

And while the Prefect stood petrified with astonishment, he retired to the further extremity of the deck, muttering to himself —

"Did I not know all along that this gleam was too sudden and too bright to last? Did I not know that he, too, would prove himself, like all the rest — an ass?

. . . . Fool! to have looked for common sense on such an earth as this! . . . . Back to chaos again, Raphael Aben-Ezra, and spin ropes of sand to the end of the farce!"

And mixing with the soldiers, he exchanged no word with the Prefect and his children, till they reached the port of Berenice; and then putting the necklace into Victoria's hands, vanished among the crowds upon the quay, no one knew whither.

CHAPTER III.

The Prefect Tested.

WHEN we lost sight of Philammon, his destiny had hurled him once more among his old friends the Goths, in search of two important elements of human comfort, freedom and a sister. The former he found at once, in a large hall where sundry Goths were lounging and toping, into the nearest corner of which he shrank, and stood, his late terror and rage forgotten altogether in the one new and absorbing thought — His sister might be in that house! . . . . and yielding to so sweet a dream, he began fancying to himself which of all those gay maidens she might be who had become in one moment more dear, more great to him, than all things else in heaven or earth. That fair-haired, rounded Italian? That fierce, luscious, aquiline-faced Jewess? That delicate, swart, sidelong-eyed Copt? No. She was Athenian, like himself. That tall, lazy Greek girl, then, from beneath whose sleepy lids flashed, once an hour, sudden lightnings, revealing depths of thought and feeling uncultivated, perhaps even unsuspected, by their possessor? Her? — Or that, her seeming sister? Or the next? . . . Or — Was it Pelagia herself, most beautiful and most sinful of them all? Fearful thought! He blushed scarlet at the bare imagination: yet why, in his secret heart, was that the most pleasant hypothesis of them all? And

suddenly flashed across him that observation of one of the girls on board the boat, on his likeness to Pelagia. Strange, that he had never recollected it before! It must be so! And yet on what a slender thread, woven of scattered hints and surmises, did that "must" depend! He would be sane; he would wait; he would have patience. Patience, with a sister yet unfound, perhaps perishing? Impossible!

Suddenly the train of his thoughts were changed perforce: —

"Come! come and see! There's a fight in the streets," called one of the damsels down the stairs, at the highest pitch of her voice.

"I shan't go," yawned a huge fellow, who was lying on his back on a sofa.

"Oh come up, my hero," said one of the girls. "Such a charming riot, and the Prefect himself in the middle of it! We have not had such a one in the street this month."

"The princes won't let me knock any of these donkey-riders on the head, and seeing other people do it only makes me envious. Give me the wine-jug — curse the girl! she's run upstairs!"

The shouting and trampling came nearer; and in another minute Wulf came rapidly downstairs, through the hall into the harem-court, and into the presence of the Amal.

"Prince — here is a chance for us. These rascally Greeks are murdering their Prefect under our very windows."

"The lying cur! Serve him right for cheating us. He has plenty of guards. Why can't the fool take care of himself?"

"They have all run away, and I saw some of them hiding among the mob. As I live, the man will be killed in five minutes more."

"Why not?"

"Why should he, when we can save him and win his favour for ever? The men's fingers are itching for a fight; it's a bad plan not to give hounds blood now and then, or they lose the knack of hunting."

"Well, it wouldn't take five minutes."

"And heroes should show that they can forgive when an enemy is in distress."

"Very true! Like an Amal too!" And the Amal sprang up and shouted to his men to follow him.

"Good by, my pretty one. Why, Wulf," cried he, as he burst out into the court, "here's our monk again! By Odin, you're welcome, my handsome boy! come along and fight too, young fellow; what were those arms given you for?"

"He is my man," said Wulf, laying his hand on Philammon's shoulder, "and blood he shall taste." And out the three hurried, Philammon, in his present reckless mood, ready for anything.

"Bring your whips. Never mind swords. Those rascals are not worth it," shouted the Amal, as he hurried down the passage brandishing his heavy thong, some ten feet in length, threw the gate open, and the next moment recoiled from a dense crush of people who surged in — and surged out again as rapidly, as the Goth, with the combined force of his weight and arm, hewed his way straight through them, felling a wretch at every blow, and followed up by his terrible companions.

They were but just in time. The four white blood-

horses were plunging and rolling over each other, and Orestes reeling in his chariot, with a stream of blood running down his face, and the hands of twenty wild monks clutching at him. "Monks again!" thought Philammon; and as he saw among them more than one hateful face, which he recollected in Cyril's court-yard on that fatal night, a flush of fierce revenge ran through him.

"Mercy!" shrieked the miserable Prefect — "I am a Christian! I swear that I am a Christian! the Bishop Atticus baptized me at Constantinople!"

"Down with the butcher! down with the heathen tyrant, who refuses the adjuration on the Gospels rather than be reconciled to the patriarch! Tear him out of the chariot!" yelled the monks.

"The craven hound!" said the Amal, stopping short, "I won't help him!" But in an instant Wulf rushed forward, and struck right and left; the monks recoiled, and Philammon, burning to prevent so shameful a scandal to the faith to which he still clung convulsively, sprung into the chariot and caught Orestes in his arms.

"You are safe, my lord; don't struggle," whispered he, while the monks flew on him. A stone or two struck him, but they only quickened his determination, and in another moment the whistling of the whips round his head, and the yell and backward rush of the monks, told him that he was safe. He carried his burden safely within the doorway of Pelagia's house, into the crowd of peeping and shrieking damsels, where twenty pair of the prettiest hands in Alexandria seized on him, and drew him into the court.

"Like a second Hylas, carried off by the nymphs!" simpered he, as he vanished into the harem, to reappear

in five minutes, his head bound up with silk handkerchiefs, and with as much of his usual impudence as he could muster.

"Your Excellency — heroes all — I am your devoted slave. . . . . I owe you life itself; and more, the valour of your succour is only surpassed by the deliciousness of your cure. I would gladly undergo a second wound to enjoy a second time the services of such hands, and to see such feet busying themselves on my behalf."

"You wouldn't have said that five minutes ago," quoth the Amal, looking at him very much as a bear might at a monkey.

"Never mind the hands and feet, old fellow, they are none of yours!" bluntly observed a voice from behind, probably Smid's and a laugh ensued.

"My saviours, my brothers!" said Orestes, politely ignoring the laughter. "How can I repay you? Is there anything in which my office here enables me — I will not say to reward, for that would be a term beneath your dignity as free barbarians — but to gratify you?"

"Give us three days' pillage of the quarter!" shouted some one.

"Ah, true valour is apt to underrate obstacles; you forget your small numbers."

"I say," quoth the Amal; "I say, take care, prefect. — If you mean to tell me that we forty couldn't cut all the throats in Alexandria in three days, and yours into the bargain, and keep your soldiers at bay all the time —"

"Half of them would join us!" cried some one. "They are half our own flesh and blood, after all!"

"Pardon me, my friends, I do not doubt it a moment. I know enough of the world never to have found a sheep-dog yet who would not, on occasion, help to make away with a little of the mutton which he guarded. Eh, my venerable sir?" turning to Wulf, with a knowing bow.

Wulf chuckled grimly, and said something to the Amal in German about being civil to guests.

"You will pardon me, my heroic friends," said Orestes, "but, with your kind permission, I will observe that I am somewhat faint and disturbed by late occurrences. To trespass on your hospitality further would be an impertinence. If, therefore, I might send a slave to find some of my apparitors —"

"No, by all the gods!" roared the Amal; "you're my guest now — my lady's at least. And no one ever went out of my house sober yet if I could help it. Set the cooks to work, my men! The Prefect shall feast with us like an emperor, and we'll send him home to night as drunk as he can wish. Come along, your Excellency; we're rough fellows, we Goths; but by the Valkyrs, no one can say that we neglect our guests!"

"It is a sweet compulsion," said Orestes, as he went in.

"Stop, by the by! Didn't one of you men catch a monk?"

"Here he is, prince, with his elbows safe behind him." And a tall, haggard, half-naked monk was dragged forward.

"Capital! bring him in. His Excellency shall judge him while dinner's cooking, and Smid shall have

the hanging of him. He hurt nobody in the scuffle; he was thinking of his dinner."

"Some rascal bit a piece out of my leg, and I tumbled down," grumbled Smid.

"Well, pay out this fellow for it, then. Bring a chair, slaves! Here, your Highness, sit there and judge."

"Two chairs!" said some one; "the Amal shan't stand, before the emperor himself."

"By all means, my dear friends. The Amal and I will act as the two Cæsars, with divided empire. I presume we shall have little difference of opinion as to the hanging of this worthy."

"Hanging's too quick for him."

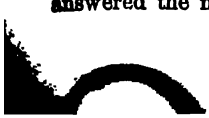
"Just what I was about to remark — there are certain judicial formalities, considered generally to be conducive to the stability, if not necessary to the existence, of the Roman empire —"

"I say, don't talk so much," shouted a Goth. "If you want to have the hanging of him yourself, do. We thought we would save you trouble."

"Ah, my excellent friend, would you rob me of the delicate pleasure of revenge? I intend to spend at least four hours to-morrow in killing this pious martyr. He will have a good time to think, between the beginning and the end of the rack."

"Do you hear that, master monk?" said Smid, chucking him under the chin, while the rest of the party seemed to think the whole business an excellent joke, and divided their ridicule openly enough between the prefect and his victim.

"The man of blood has said it. I am a martyr," answered the monk, in a dogged voice.



"You will take a good deal of time in becoming one."

"Death may be long, but glory is everlasting."

"True. I forgot that, and will save you the said glory, if I can help it, for a year or two. Who was it struck me with the stone?"

No answer.

"Tell me, and the moment he is in my lictors' hands I pardon you freely."

The monk laughed. "Pardon? Pardon me eternal bliss, and the things unspeakable, which God has prepared for those who love him? Tyrant and butcher! I struck thee, thou second Dioclesian — I hurled the stone — I, Ammonius. Would to heaven that it had smitten thee through, thou Sisera, like the nail of Jael the Kenite!"

"Thanks, my friend. Heroes, you have a cellar for monks as well as for wine? I will trouble you with this hero's psalm-singing to night, and send my apparitors for him in the morning.

"If he begins howling when we are in bed, your men won't find much of him left in the morning," said the Amal. "But here come the slaves, announcing dinner."

"Stay," said Orestes; "there is one more with whom I have an account to settle — that young philosopher there."

"Oh, he is coming in, too. He never was drunk in his life, I'll warrant, poor fellow, and it's high time for him to begin." And the Amal laid a good-natured bear's paw on Philammon's shoulder, who hung back in perplexity, and cast a piteous look towards Wulf.

Wulf answered it by a shake of the head, which gave Pilammon courage to stammer out a courteous refusal. The Amal swore an oath at him which made the cloister ring again, and with a quiet shove of his heavy hand, sent him staggering half across the court: but Wulf interposed.

"The boy is mine, prince. He is no drunkard, and I will not let him become one. Would to heaven," added he, under his breath, "that I could say the same to some others. Send us out our supper here, when you are done. Half a sheep or so will do between us; and enough of the strongest to wash it down with. Smid knows my quantity."

"Why in heaven's name are you not coming in?"

"That mob will be trying to burst the gates again before two hours are out; and as some one must stand sentry, it may as well be a man who will not have his ears stopped up by wine and women's kisses. The boy will stay with me."

So the party went in, leaving Wulf and Philammon alone in the outer hall.

There the two sat for some half-hour, casting stealthy glances at each other, and wondering, perhaps, each of them vainly enough, what was going on in the opposite brain. Philammon, though his heart was full of his sister, could not help noticing the air of deep sadness which hung about the scarred and weatherbeaten features of the old warrior. The grimness which he had remarked on their first meeting seemed to be now changed into a settled melancholy. The furrows round his mouth and eyes had become deeper and sharper. Some perpetual indignation seemed smouldering in the knitted brow and protruding upper lip. He sat there

silent and motionless for some half-hour, his chin resting on his hands, and they again upon the butt of his axe, apparently in deep thought, and listening with a silent sneer at the clinking of glasses and dishes within.

Philammon felt too much respect both for his age, and his stately sadness, to break the silence. At last some louder burst of merriment than usual aroused him.

"What do you call that?" said he, speaking in Greek.

"Folly and vanity."

"And what does she there — the Alruna — the prophet-woman, call it?"

"Whom do you mean?"

"Why the Greek woman whom we went to hear talk this morning?"

"Folly and vanity."

"Why can't she cure that Roman hairdresser there of it, then?"

Philammon was silent — "Why not, indeed!"

"Do you think she could cure any one of it?"

"Of what?"

"Of getting drunk, and wasting their strength and their fame, and their hard-won treasures upon eating and drinking, and fine clothes, and bad women."

"She is most pure herself, and she preaches purity to all who hear her."

"Curse preaching. I have preached for these four months."

"Perhaps she may have some more winning arguments — perhaps —"

"I know. Such a beautiful bit of flesh and blood as she is might get a hearing, when a grizzled old

head-splitter like me was called a dotard. Eh? Well. It's natural."

A long silence.

"She is a grand woman. I never saw such a one, and I have seen many. There was a prophetess once, lived in an island in the Weser-stream — and when a man saw her, even before she spoke a word, one longed to crawl to her feet on all fours, and say, 'There, tread on me; I am not fit for you to wipe your feet upon.' And many a warrior did it. . . . . Perhaps I may have done it myself, before now. . . . . And this one is strangely like her. She would make a prince's wife now."

Philammon started. What new feeling was it, which made him so indignant at the notion?

"Beauty? What's body without soul? What's beauty without wisdom? What's beauty without chastity? Beast! fool! wallowing in the mire which every hog has fouled!"

"Like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman who is without discretion."

"Who said that?"

"Solomon, the king of Israel."

"I never heard of him. But he was a right Sagaman, whoever said it. And she is a pure maiden, that other one?"

"Spotless as the" — blessed Virgin, Philammon was going to say — but checked himself. There were sad recollections about the words.

Wulf sat silent for a few minutes, while Philammon's thoughts reverted at once to the new purpose for which alone life seemed worth having. . . . To find his sister! That one thought had in a few hours

changed and matured the boy into the man. Hitherto he had been only the leaf before the wind, the puppet of every new impression; but now circumstance, which had been leading him along in such soft fetters for many a month, was become his deadly foe; and all his energy and cunning, all his little knowledge of man and of society, rose up sturdily and shrewdly to fight in this new cause. Wulf was now no longer a phenomenon to be wondered at, but an instrument to be used. The broken hints which he had just given of discontent with Pelagia's presence inspired the boy with sudden hope, and cautiously he began to hint at the existence of persons who would be glad to remove her. Wulf caught at the notion, and replied to it with searching questions, till Philammon, finding plain speaking the better part of cunning, told him openly the whole events of the morning, and the mystery which Arsenius had half revealed; and then shuddered with mingled joy and horror as Wulf, after ruminating over the matter for a weary five minutes, made answer.

"And what if Pelagia herself were your sister?"

Philammon was bursting forth in some passionate answer, when the old man stopped him, and went on slowly, looking him through and through —

"Because, when a penniless young monk claims kin with a woman who is drinking out of the winecups of the Cæsars, and filling a place for a share of which kings' daughters have been thankful — and will be again before long — why then, though an old man may be too good-natured to call it all a lie at first sight, he can't help supposing that the young monk has an eye to his own personal profit, eh?"

"My profit?" cried poor Philammon, starting up.

"Good God! what object on earth can I have, but to rescue her from this infamy, to purity and holiness?"

He had touched the wrong chord.

"Infamy? you accursed Egyptian slave!" cried the Prince, starting up in his turn, red with passion, and clutching at the whip which hung over his head. "Infamy? As if she, and you too, ought not to consider yourselves blest in her being allowed to wash the feet of an Amal!"

"Oh, forgive me!" said Philammon, terrified at the fruits of his own clumsiness. "But you forget — you forget, she is not married to him!"

"Married to him? A freedwoman? No; thank Freya! he has not fallen as low as that, at least; and never shall, if I kill the witch with my own hands. A freedwoman!"

Poor Philammon! And he had been told but that morning that he was a slave. He hid his face in his hands, and burst into an agony of tears.

"Come, come," said the testy warrior, softened at once. "Woman's tears don't matter; but somehow I never could bear to make a man cry. When you are cool, and have learnt common courtesy, we'll talk more about all this. So! Hush; enough is enough. Here comes the supper, and I am as hungry as Loke."

And he commenced devouring like his namesake, "the grey beast of the wood," and forcing, in his rough hospitable way, Philammon to devour also, much against his will and stomach.

"There. I feel happier now!" quoth Wulf, at last. "There is nothing to be done in this accursed place but to eat. I get no fighting, no hunting. I hate

women as they hate me. I don't know anything, indeed, that I don't hate, except eating and singing. And now, what with those girls' vile unmanly harps and flutes, no one cares to listen to a true rattling war-song. There they are at it now, with their catterwauling, squealing all together like a set of starlings on a foggy morning! We'll have a song, too, to drown the noise." And he burst out with a wild rich melody, acting, in uncouth gestures and a suppressed tone of voice, the scene which the words described: —

An elk looked out of the pine forest:
He snuffed up east, he snuffed down west,
Stealthy and still.

His mane and his horns were heavy with snow;
I laid my arrow across my bow,
Stealthy and still.

And then, quickening his voice, as his whole face blazed up into fierce excitement —

The bow it rattled, the arrow flew,
It smote his blade-bones through and through,
Hurrah!

I sprang at his throat like a wolf of the wood,
And I warmed my hands in the smoking blood,
Hurrah!

And, with a shout that echoed and rang from wall to wall, and pealed away above the roofs, he leapt to his feet with a gesture and look of savage frenzy which made Philammon recoil. But the passion was gone in an instant, and Wulf sat down again, chuckling to himself —

"There — that is something like a warrior's song. That makes the old blood spin along again! But this

debauching furnace of a climate! — no man can keep his muscle, or his courage, or his money, or anything else in it. May the gods curse the day when first I saw it!"

Philammon said nothing, but sat utterly aghast at an outbreak so unlike Wulf's usual caustic reserve and stately self-restraint, and shuddering at the thought that it might be an instance of that dæmoniac possession to which these barbarians were supposed by Christians and by Neo-Platonists to be peculiarly subject. But the horror was not yet at its height; for in another minute the doors of the women's court flew open, and, attracted by Wulf's shout, out poured the whole Bacchanalian crew, with Orestes, crowned with flowers, and led by the Amal and Pelagia, reeling in the midst, wine-cup in hand.

"There is my philosopher, my preserver, my patron saint!" hiccuped he. "Bring him to my arms, that I may encircle his lovely neck with pearls of India, and barbaric gold!"

"For God's sake, let me escape!" whispered he to Wulf, as the rout rushed upon him. Wulf opened the door in an instant, and he dashed through it. As he went, the old man held out his hand —

"Come and see me again, boy! Me only. The old warrior will not hurt you!"

There was a kindly tone in the voice, a kindly light in the eye, which made Philammon promise to obey. He glanced one look back through the gateway as he fled, and just saw a wild whirl of Goths and girls, spinning madly round the court in the world-old Teutonic waltz, while, high above their heads, in the up-lifted arms of the mighty Amal, was tossing the

beautiful figure of Pelagia, tearing the garland from her floating hair to pelt the dancers with its roses. And that might be his sister! He hid his face and fled, and the gate shut out the revellers from his eyes; and it is high time that it should shut them out from ours also.

Some four hours more had past. The revellers were sleeping off their wine, and the moon shining bright and cold across the court, when Wulf came out, carrying a heavy jar of wine, followed by Smid, a goblet in each hand.

"Here, comrade, out into the middle, to catch a breath of night-air. Are all the fools asleep?"

"Every mother's son of them. Ah! this is refreshing after that room. What a pity it is that all men are not born with heads like ours!"

"Very sad, indeed," said Wulf, filling his goblet.

"What a quantity of pleasure they lose in this life! There they are, snoring like hogs. Now, you and I are good to finish this jar, at least."

"And another after it, if our talk is not over by that time."

"Why, are you going to hold a council of war?"

"That is as you take it. Now, look here, Smid. Whomsoever I cannot trust, I suppose I may trust you, eh?"

"Well!" quoth Smid, surlily, putting down his goblet, "that is a strange question to ask of a man who has marched, and hungered, and plundered, and conquered, and been well beaten by your side for five-and-twenty years, through all lands between the Weser and Alexandria!"

"I am growing old, I suppose, and so I suspect

every one. But hearken to me, for between wine and ill-temper out it must come. You saw that Akuna woman?"

"Of course."

"Well?"

"Well?"

"Why, did not you think she would make a wife for any man?"

"Well?"

"And why not for our Amal?"

"That's his concern as well as hers, and hers as well as ours."

"She? Ought she not to think herself only too much honoured by marrying a son of Odin? Is she going to be more dainty than Placidia?"

"What was good enough for an emperor's daughter must be good enough for her."

"Good enough? And Adolf only a Balt, while Amalric is a full-blooded Amal — Odin's son by both sides?"

"I don't know whether she would understand that."

"Then we would make her. Why not carry her off, and marry her to the Amal whether she chose or not? She would be well content enough with him in a week, I will warrant."

"But there is Pelagia in the way."

"Put her out of the way, then."

"Impossible."

"It was this morning; a week hence it may not be. I heard a promise made to-night which will do it, if there be the spirit of a Goth left in the poor besotted lad whom we know of."

"Oh, he is all right at heart; never fear him. But what was the promise?"

"I will not tell till it is claimed. I will not be the man to shame my own nation and the blood of the gods. But if that drunken Prefect recollects it — why let him recollect it. And what is more, the monk-boy who was here to-night —"

"Ah, what a well-grown lad that is wasted!"

"More than suspects — and if his story is true, I more than suspect too — that Pelagia is his sister."

"His sister! But what of that?"

"He wants, of course, to carry her off, and make a nun of her."

"You would not let him do such a thing to the poor child?"

"If folks get in my way, Smid, they must go down. So much the worse for them: but old Wulf was never turned back yet by man or beast, and he will not be now."

"After all, it will serve the hussy right. But Amalric?"

"Out of sight, out of mind."

"But they say the Prefect means to marry the girl."

"He? That scented ape? She would not be such a wretch."

"But he does intend; and she intends too. It is the talk of the whole town. We should have to put him out of the way first."

"Why not? Easy enough, and a good riddance for Alexandria. Yet if we made away with him, we should be forced to take the city too; and I doubt whether we have hands enough for that."

"The guards might join us. I will go down to the barracks and try them, if you choose, to-morrow. I am boon-companion with a good many of them already. But, after all, Prince Wulf — of course you are always right; we all know that — but what's the use of marrying this Hypatia to the Amal?"

"Use?" said Wulf, smiting down his goblet on the pavement. "Use? you purblind old hamster-rat, who think of nothing but filling your own cheek-pouches! — To give him a wife worthy of a hero, as he is, in spite of all — a wife who will make him sober instead of drunk, wise instead of a fool, daring instead of a sluggard — a wife who can command the rich people for us, and give us a hold here, which if once we get, let us see who will break it! Why, with those two ruling in Alexandria we might be masters of Africa in three months. We'd send to Spain for the Wendels, to move on Carthage; we'd send up the Adriatic for the Longbeards, to land in Pentapolis; we'd sweep the whole coast without losing a man, now it is drained of troops by that fool Heraclian's Roman expedition; make the Wendels and Longbeards shake hands here in Alexandria; draw lots for their shares of the coast; and then!" —

"And then what?"

"Why, when we had settled Africa, I would call out a crew of picked heroes, and sail away south for Asgard — I'd try that Red Sea this time — and see Odin face to face, or die searching for him."

"Oh!" groaned Smid. "And I suppose you would expect me to come too, instead of letting me stop halfway, and settle there among the dragons and elephants. Well, well, wise men are like moorlands

— ride as far as you will on the sound ground, you are sure to come upon a soft place at last. However, I will go down to the guards to-morrow, if my head don't ache."

"And I will see the boy about Pelagia. Drink to our plot!"

And the two old iron-heads drank on, till the stars paled out, and the eastward shadows of the cloister vanished in the blaze of dawn.

CHAPTER IV.

Jews Against Christians.

THE little porter, after having carried Arsenius's message to Miriam, had run back in search of Philammon and his foster-father; and not finding them, had spent the evening in such frantic rushings to and fro, as produced great doubts of his sanity among the people of the quarter. At last hunger sent him home to supper; at which meal he tried to find vent for his excited feelings in his favourite employment of beating his wife. Whereon Miriam's two Syrian slave-girls, attracted by her screams, came to the rescue, threw a pail of water over him, and turned him out of doors. He, nothing discomfited, likened himself smilingly to Socrates conquered by Xantippe; and, philosophically yielding to circumstances, hopped about like a tame magpie for a couple of hours at the entrance of the alley, pouring forth a stream of light raillery on the passers by, which several times endangered his personal safety; till at last Philammon, hurrying breathlessly home, rushed into his arms.

"Hush! Hither with me! Your star still prospers. She calls for you."

"Who?"

"Miriam herself. Be secret as the grave. You she will see and speak with. The message of Arse-

nius she rejected in language which it is unnecessary for philosophic lips to repeat. Come; but give her good words — as are fit to an enchantress who can stay the stars in their courses, and command the spirits of the third heaven."

Philammon hurried home with Eudæmon. Little cared he now for Hypatia's warning against Miriam. .... Was he not in search of a sister?

"So, you wretch, you are back again!" cried one of the girls, as they knocked at the outer door of Miriam's apartments. "What do you mean by bringing young men here at this time of night?"

"Better go down, and beg pardon of that poor wife of yours. She has been weeping and praying for you to her crucifix all the evening, you ungrateful little ape!"

"Female superstitions — but I forgive her. .... Peace, barbarian women! I bring this youthful philosopher hither by your mistress's own appointment."

"He must wait, then, in the ante-room. There is a gentleman with my mistress at present."

So Philammon waited in a dark, dingy ante-room, luxuriously furnished with faded tapestry, and divans which lined the walls; and fretted and fidgeted, while the two girls watched him over their embroidery out of the corners of their eyes, and agreed that he was a very stupid person for showing no inclination to return their languishing glances.

In the mean while, Miriam, within, was listening, with a smile of grim delight, to a swarthy and weather-beaten young Jew.

"I knew, mother in Israel, that all depended on

my pace; and night and day I rode from Ostia toward Tarentum: but the messenger of the uncircumcised was better mounted than I; I therefore bribed a certain slave to lame his horse, and passed him by a whole stage on the second day. Nevertheless, by night the Philistine had caught me up again, the evil angels helping him; and my soul was mad within me."

"And what then, Jonadab Bar-Zebudah?"

"I bethought me of Ehud, and of Joab also, when he was pursued by Asahel, and considered much of the lawfulness of the deed, not being a man of blood. Nevertheless, we were together in the darkness, and I smote him."

Miriam clapped her hands.

"Then putting on his clothes, and taking his letters and credentials, as was but reasonable, I passed myself off for the messenger of the emperor, and so rode the rest of that journey at the expense of the heathen; and I hereby return you the balance saved."

"Never mind the balance. Keep it, thou worthy son of Jacob. What next?"

"When I came to Tarentum, I sailed in the galley which I had chartered from certain sea-robbers. Valiant men they were, nevertheless, and kept true faith with me. For when we had come halfway, rowing with all our might, behold another galley coming in our wake and about to pass us by, which I knew for an Alexandrian, as did the captain also, who assured me that she had come from hence to Brundusium with letters from Orestes."

"Well?"

"It seemed to me both base to be passed, and more base to waste all the expense wherewith you and

our elders had charged themselves; so I took counsel with the man of blood, offering him over and above our bargain, two hundred gold pieces of my own, which please to pay to my account with Rabbi Ezekiel, who lives by the Watergate in Pelusium. Then the pirates, taking counsel, agreed to run down the enemy; for our galley was a sharp-beaked Liburnian, while theirs was only a light messenger trireme."

"And you did it?"

"Else had I not been here. They were delivered into our hands, so that we struck them full in midlength, and they sank like Pharaoh and his host."

"So perish all the enemies of the nation!" cried Miriam. "And now it is impossible, you say, for fresh news to arrive for these ten days?"

"Impossible, the captain assured me, owing to the rising of the wind, and the signs of southerly storm."

"Here, take this letter for the Chief Rabbi, and the blessing of a mother in Israel. Thou hast played the man for thy people; and thou shalt go to the grave full of years and honours, with men-servants and maid-servants, gold and silver, children and children's children, with thy foot on the necks of heathens, and the blessing of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to eat of the goose which is fattening in the desert, and the Leviathan which lieth in the great sea, to be meat for all true Israelites at the last day."

And the Jew turned and went out, perhaps, in his simple fanaticism, the happiest man in Egypt at that moment.

He passed out through the antechamber, leering

at the slave-girls, and scowling at Philammon; and the youth was ushered into the presence of Miriam.

She sat, coiled up like a snake, on a divan, writing busily in a tablet upon her knees, while on the cushions beside her glittered splendid jewels, which she had been fingering over as a child might its toys. She did not look up for a few minutes; and Philammon could not help, in spite of his impatience, looking round the little room, and contrasting its dirty splendour, and heavy odour of wine, and food, and perfumes, with the sunny grace and cleanliness of Greek houses. Against the walls stood presses and chests fretted with fantastic Oriental carving; illuminated rolls of parchment lay in heaps in a corner; a lamp of strange form hung from the ceiling, and shed a dim and lurid light upon an object which chilled the youth's blood for a moment — a bracket against the wall, on which, in a plate of gold, engraven with mystic signs, stood the mummy of an infant's head; one of those teraphim, from which, as Philammon knew, the sorcerers of the East professed to evoke oracular responses.

At last, she looked up, and spoke in a shrill, harsh voice.

"Well, my fair boy, and what do you want with the poor old proscribed Jewess? Have you coveted yet any of the pretty things which she has had the wit to make her slave-demons save from the Christian robbers?"

Philammon's tale was soon told. The old woman listened, watching him intently with her burning eye; and then answered slowly —

"Well, and what if you are a slave?"

"Am I one, then? Am I?"

"Of course you are. Arsenius spoke truth. I saw him buy you at Ravenna, just fifteen years ago. I bought your sister at the same time. She is two-and-twenty now. You were four years younger than her, I should say."

"Oh heavens! and you know my sister still! Is she Pelagia?"

"You were a pretty boy," went on the hag, apparently not hearing him. "If I had thought you were going to grow up as beautiful and as clever as you are, I would have bought you myself. The Goths were just marching, and Arsenius gave only eighteen gold pieces for you — or twenty — I am growing old, and forget everything, I think. But there would have been the expense of your education, and your sister cost me in training — oh what sums! Not that she was not worth the money — no, no, the darling!"

"And you know where she is? Oh tell me — in the name of mercy, tell me!"

"Why, then?"

"Why, then? Have you not the heart of a human being in you? Is she not my sister?"

"Well? You have done very well for fifteen years without your sister — why can you not do as well now? You don't recollect her — you don't love her."

"Not love her? I would die for her — die for you if you will but help me to see her!"

"You would, would you? And if I brought you to her, what then? What if she were Pelagia herself, what then? She is happy enough now, and rich enough. Could you make her happier or richer?"

"Can you ask? I must — I will — reclaim her from the infamy in which I am sure she lives."

"Ah ha! sir monk? I expected as much. I know, none knows better, what those fine words mean. The burnt child dreads the fire: but the burnt old woman quenches it, you will find. Now listen. I do not say that you shall not see her — I do not say that Pelagia herself is not the woman whom you seek — but — you are in my power. Don't frown and pout. I can deliver you as a slave to Arsenius when I choose. One word from me to Orestes, and you are in fetters as a fugitive."

"I will escape!" cried he, fiercely.

"Escape me?" — She laughed, pointing to the teraph — "Me, who, if you fled beyond Kaf, or dived to the depths of the ocean, could make these dead lips confess where you were, and command demons to bear you back to me upon their wings! Escape me! Better to obey me, and see your sister."

Philammon shuddered, and submitted. The spell of the woman's eye, the terror of her words, which he half believed, and the agony of longing, conquered him, and he gasped out —

"I will obey you — only — only —"

"Only you are not quite a man yet, but half a monk still, eh? I must know that before I help you, my pretty boy. Are you a monk still, or a man?"

"What do you mean?"

"Ah, ha, ha!" laughed she, shrilly. "And these Christian dogs don't know what a man means? Are you a monk, then? leaving the man alone, as above your understanding."

"I? — I am a student of philosophy."

"But no man?"

"I am a man, I suppose."

"I don't; if you had been, you would have been making love like a man to that heathen woman many a month ago."

"I — to her?"

"Yes, I — to her!" said Miriam, coarsely imitating his tone of shocked humility. "I, the poor penniless boy-scholar, to her, the great, rich, wise, worshipped she-philosopher, who holds the sacred keys of the inner shrine of the east wind — and just because I am a man, and the handsomest man in Alexandria, and she a woman, and the vainest woman in Alexandria, and therefore I am stronger than she, and can twist her round my finger, and bring her to her knees at my feet when I like, as soon as I open my eyes, and discover that I am a man. Eh, boy? Did she ever teach you that among her mathematics and metaphysics, and gods and goddesses?"

Philammon stood blushing scarlet. The sweet poison had entered, and every vein glowed with it for the first time in his life. Miriam saw her advantage.

"There, there — don't be frightened at your new lesson. After all, I liked you from the first moment I saw you, and asked the teraph about you, and I got an answer — such an answer! — You shall know it some day. At all events, it set the poor old soft-hearted Jewess on throwing away her money. Did you ever guess from whom your monthly gold-piece came?"

Philammon started, and Miriam burst into loud, shrill laughter.

"From Hypatia, I'll warrant! From the fair

Greek woman, of course — vain child that you are — never thinking of the poor old Jewess."

"And did you? did you?" gasped Philammon. "Have I to thank you, then, for that strange generosity?"

"Not to thank me, but to obey me; for mind, I can prove your debt to me, every obol, and claim it if I choose. But don't fear; I won't be hard on you, just because you are in my power. I hate every one who is not so. As soon as I have a hold on them, I begin to love them. Old folks, like children, are fond of their own playthings."

"And I am yours, then?" said Philammon, fiercely.

"You are indeed, my beautiful boy," answered she, looking up with so insinuating a smile that he could not be angry. "After all, I know how to toss my balls gently — and for these forty years I have only lived to make young folks happy; so you need not be afraid of the poor soft-hearted old woman. Now — you saved Orestes' life yesterday."

"How did you find out that?"

"I? I know everything. I know what the swallows say when they pass each other on the wing, and what the fishes think of in the summer sea. — You, too, will be able to guess some day, without the teraph's help. But in the mean time you must enter Orestes' service. Why? — What are you hesitating about? Do you not know that you are high in his favour? He will make you secretary — raise you to be chamberlain some day, if you know how to make good use of your fortune."

Philammon stood in astonished silence; and at last —

"Servant to that man? What care I for him or his

honours? Why do you tantalize me thus? I have no wish on earth but to see my sister!"

"You will be far more likely to see her if you belong to the court of a great officer — perhaps more than an officer — than if you remain a penniless monk. Not that I believe you. Your only wish on earth, eh? Do you not care, then, ever to see the fair Hypatia again?"

"I? Why should I not see her? Am I not her pupil?"

"She will not have pupils much longer, my child. If you wish to hear her wisdom — and much good may it do you — you must go for it henceforth somewhat nearer to Orestes' palace than the lecture-room is. Ah! you start. Have I found you an argument now? No — ask no questions. I explain nothing to monks. But take these letters; to-morrow morning at the third hour go to Orestes' palace, and ask for his secretary, Ethan the Chaldee. Say boldly that you bring important news of state; and then follow your star: it is a fairer one than you fancy. Go! obey me, or you see no sister."

Philammon felt himself trapped; but, after all, what might not this strange woman do for him? It seemed, if not his only path, still his nearest path to Pelagia; and in the mean while he was in the hag's power, and he must submit to his fate; so he took the letters, and went out.

"And so you think that you are going to have her?" chuckled Miriam to herself, when Philammon went out. "To make a penitent of her, eh? — a nun, or a she-hermit; to set her to appease your God by crawling on all-fours among the mummies for twenty years, with a

chain round her neck and a clog at her ankle, fancying herself all the while the bride of the Nazarene? And you think that old Miriam is going to give her up to you for that? No, no, sir monk! Better she were dead! .... Follow your dainty bait! — follow it, as the donkey does the grass which his driver offers him, always an inch from his nose..... You in my power! — and Orestes in my power! .... I must negotiate that new loan to-morrow, I suppose..... I shall never be paid. The dog will ruin me, after all! How much is it, now? Let me see." .... And she began fumbling in her escritoire, over bonds and notes of hand, "I shall never be paid: but power! — to have power! To see those heathen slaves and Christian hounds plotting and vapouring, and fancying themselves the masters of the world, and never dreaming that we are pulling the strings, and that they are our puppets! — we, the children of the promises — we, The Nation — we, the seed of Abraham! Poor fools! I could almost pity them, as I think of their faces when Messiah comes, and they find out who were the true lords of the world, after all! .... He must be Emperor of the South, though, that Orestes; he must, though I have to lend him Raphael's jewels to make him so. For he must marry the Greek woman. He shall. She hates him, of course..... So much the deeper revenge for me. And she loves that monk. I saw it in her eyes there in the garden. So much the better for me, too. He will dangle willingly enough at Orestes' heels for the sake of being near her — poor fool! We will make him secretary, or chamberlain. He has wit enough for it, they say, or for anything. So Orestes and he shall be the two jaws of my pincers, to squeeze what I want

out of that Greek Jezebel. . . . . And then — then for the black agate!"

Was the end of her speech a bathos? Perhaps not; for as she spoke the last word, she drew from her bosom, where it hung round her neck by a chain, a broken talisman, exactly similar to the one which she coveted so fiercely, and looked at it long and lovingly — kissed it — wept over it — spoke to it — fondled it in her arms as a mother would a child — murmured over it snatches of lullabies; and her grim, withered features grew softer, purer, grander; and rose ennobled, for a moment, to their long-lost might-have-been, to that personal idea which every soul brings with it into the world, which shines, dim and potential, in the face of every sleeping babe, before it has been scarred, and distorted, and encrusted in the long tragedy of life. Sorceress she was, pander and slave-dealer, steeped to the lips in falsehood, ferocity, and avarice; yet that paltry stone brought home to her some thought, true, spiritual, impalpable, unmarketable, before which all her treasures and all her ambition were as worthless in her own eyes as they were in the eyes of the angels of God.

But little did Miriam think that at the same moment a brawny, clownish monk was standing in Cyril's private chamber, and, indulged with the special honour of a cup of good wine in the patriarch's very presence, was telling to him and Arsenius the following history: —

"So I, finding that the Jews had chartered this pirate ship, went to the master thereof, and finding favour in his eyes, hired myself to row therein, being sure, from what I had overheard from the Jews, that she was destined to bring the news to Alexandria as

quickly as possible. Therefore, fulfilling the work which his Holiness had intrusted to my incapacity, I embarked, and rowed continually among the rest; and being unskilled in such labour, received many curses and stripes in the cause of the church — the which I trust are laid to my account hereafter. Moreover, Satan entered into me, desiring to slay me, and almost tore me asunder, so that I vomited much, and loathed all manner of meat. Nevertheless, I rowed on valiantly, being such as I am, vomiting continually, till the heathens were moved with wonder, and forbore to beat me, giving me strong liquors in pity; wherefore I rowed all the more valiantly day and night, trusting that by my unworthiness the cause of the Catholic Church might be in some slight wise assisted."

"And so it is," quoth Cyril. "Why do you not sit down, man?"

"Pardon me," quoth the monk, with a piteous gesture; "of sitting, as of all carnal pleasure, cometh satiety at the last."

"And now," said Cyril, "what reward am I to give you for your good service?"

"It is reward enough to know that I have done good service. Nevertheless, if the holy patriarch be so inclined without reason, there is an ancient Christian, my mother according to the flesh —"

"Come to me to-morrow, and she shall be well seen to. And mind — look to it, if I make you not a deacon of the city, when I promote Peter."

The monk kissed his superior's hand, and withdrew. Cyril turned to Arsenius, betrayed for once into geniality by his delight, and smiting his thigh —

"We have beaten the heathen for once, eh?" And

then, in the usual artificial tone of an ecclesiastic — "And what would my father recommend in furtherance of the advantage so mercifully thrown into our hand?"

Arsenius was silent.

"I," went on Cyril, "should be inclined to announce the news this very night, in my sermon."

Arsenius shook his head.

"Why not? why not?" asked Cyril, impatiently.

"Better to keep it secret till others tell it. Reserved knowledge is always reserved strength; and if the man, as I hope he does not, intends evil to the church, let him commit himself before you use your knowledge against him. True, you may have a scruple of conscience as to the lawfulness of allowing a sin which you might prevent. To me it seems that the sin lies in the deed, and that sometimes — I only say sometimes — it may be a means of saving the sinner to allow his root of iniquity to bear fruit, and fill him with his own devices."

"Dangerous doctrine, my father."

"Like all sound doctrine — a savour of life or of death, according as it is received. I have not said it to the multitude, but to a discerning brother. And even politically speaking — let him commit himself, if he be really plotting rebellion, and then speak, and smite his Babel tower."

"You think, then, that he does not know of Heraclian's defeat already?"

"If he does, he will keep it secret from the people; and our chances of turning them suddenly will be nearly the same."

"Good. After all, the existence of the Catholic Church in Alexandria depends on this struggle, and it

is well to be wary. Be it so. It is well for me that I have you for an adviser."

And thus Cyril, usually the most impatient and intractable of plotters, gave in, as wise men should, to a wiser man than himself, and made up his mind to keep the secret, and to command the monk to keep it also.

Philammon, after a sleepless night, and a welcome visit to the public baths, which the Roman tyranny, wiser in its generation than modern liberty, provided so liberally for its victims, set forth to the prefect's palace, and gave his message; but Orestes, who had been of late astonishing the Alexandrian public by an unwonted display of alacrity, was already in the adjoining Basilica. Thither the youth was conducted by an apparitor, and led up the centre of the enormous hall, gorgeous with frescoes and coloured marbles, and surrounded by aisles and galleries, in which the inferior magistrates were hearing causes, and doing such justice as the complicated technicalities of Roman law chose to mete out. Through a crowd of anxious loungers the youth passed to the apse of the upper end, in which the prefect's throne stood empty, and then turned into a side chamber, where he found himself alone with the secretary, a portly Chaldee eunuch, with a sleek pale face, small pig's eyes, and an enormous turban. The man of pen and paper took the letter, opened it with solemn deliberation, and then, springing to his feet, darted out of the room in most undignified haste, leaving Philammon to wait and wonder. In half an hour he returned, his little eyes grown big with some great idea.

"Youth! your star is in the ascendant; you are the fortunate bearer of fortunate news! His Excellency

himself commands your presence." And the two went out.

In another chamber, the door of which was guarded by armed men, Orestes was walking up and down in high excitement, looking somewhat the worse for the events of the past night, and making occasional appeals to a gold goblet which stood on the table.

"Ha! No other than my preserver himself! Boy, I will make your fortune. Miriam says that you wish to enter my service."

Philammon, not knowing what to say, thought the best answer would be to bow as low as he could.

"Ah, ha! Graceful, but not quite according to etiquette. You will soon teach him, eh, Secretary? Now to business. Hand me the notes to sign and seal. To the prefect of the Stationaries" —

"Here, your Excellency."

"To the Prefect of the Corn-market — How many wheat-ships have you ordered to be unladen?"

"Two, your Excellency."

"Well, that will be largess enough for the time being. To the Defender of the Plebs — The devil break his neck!"

"He may be trusted, most noble; he is bitterly jealous of Cyril's influence. And, moreover, he owes my insignificance much money."

"Good! Now the notes to the Gaol-masters, about the gladiators."

"Here, your Excellency."

"To Hypatia. No. I will honour my bride elect with my own illustrious presence. As I live, here is a morning's work for a man with a racking headache!"

"Your Excellency has the strength of seven. May you live for ever!"

And really, Orestes' power of getting through business, when he chose, was surprising enough. A cold head and a colder heart make many things easy.

But Philammon's whole soul was fixed on those words. "His bride elect!" . . . Was it that Miriam's hints of the day before had raised some selfish vision, or was it pity and horror at such a fate for her — for his idol? — But he passed five minutes in a dream, from which he was awakened by the sound of another and still dearer name.

"And now, for Pelagia. We can but try."

"Your Excellency might offend the Goth."

"Curse the Goth! He shall have his choice of all the beauties in Alexandria, and be Count of Pentapolis if he likes. But a spectacle I must have; and no one but Pelagia can dance Venus Anadyomene."

Philammon's blood rushed to his heart, and then back again to his brow, as he reeled with horror and shame.

"The people will be mad with joy to see her on the stage once more. Little they thought, the brutes, how I was plotting for their amusement, even when as drunk as Silenus."

"Your nobility only lives for the good of your slaves."

"Here, boy! So fair a lady requires a fair messenger. You shall enter on my service at once, and carry this letter to Pelagia. Why? — why do you not come and take it?"

"To Pelagia?" gasped the boy. "In the theatre? Publicly? Venus Anadyomene?"

"Yes, fool! Were you, too, drunk last night after all?"

"She is my sister!"

"Well, and what of that? Not that I believe you, you villain! So!" said Orestes, who comprehended the matter in an instant. "Apparitors!"

The door opened, and the guard appeared.

"Here is a good boy who is inclined to make a fool of himself. Keep him out of harm's way for a few days. But don't hurt him; for, after all, he saved my life yesterday, when you scoundrels ran away."

And, without further ado, the hapless youth was collared, and led down a vaulted passage into the guard-room, amid the jeers of the guard, who seemed only to owe him a grudge for his yesterday's prowess, and showed great alacrity in fitting him with a heavy set of irons; which done, he was thrust head foremost into a cell of the prison, locked in, and left to his meditations.

CHAPTER V.

She Stoops to Conquer.

"But, fairest Hypatia, conceive yourself struck in the face by a great stone, several hundred howling wretches leaping up at you like wild beasts — two minutes more, and you are torn limb from limb. What would even you do in such a case?"

"Let them tear me limb from limb, and die as I have lived."

"Ah, but — When it came to fact, and death was staring you in the face?"

"And why should man fear death?"

"Ahem! No, not death, of course; but the act of dying. That may be, surely, under such circumstances, to say the least, disagreeable. If our ideal, Julian the Great, found a little dissimulation necessary, and was even a better Christian than I have ever pretended to be, till he found himself able to throw off the mask, why should not I? Consider me as a lower being than yourself — one of the herd, if you will; but a penitent member thereof, who comes to make the fullest possible reparation, by doing any desperate deed on which you may choose to put him, and prove myself as able and willing, if once I have the power, as Julian himself."

Such was the conversation which passed between

Hypatia and Orestes half an hour after Philammon had taken possession of his new abode.

Hypatia looked at the Prefect with calm penetration, not unmixed with scorn and fear.

"And pray what has produced this sudden change in your Excellency's earnestness? For four months your promises have been lying fallow." She did not confess how glad she would have been at heart to see them lying fallow still.

"Because — This morning I have news; which I tell to you the first as a compliment. We will take care that all Alexandria knows it before sundown. Heraclian has conquered."

"Conquered?" cried Hypatia, springing from her seat.

"Conquered, and utterly destroyed the emperor's forces at Ostia. So says a messenger on whom I can depend. And even if the news should prove false, I can prevent the contrary report from spreading, or what is the use of being prefect? You demur? Do you not see that if we can keep the notion alive but a week our cause is won?"

"How so?"

"I have treated already with all the officers of the city, and every one of them has acted like a wise man, and given me a promise of help, conditional of course on Heraclian's success, being as tired as I am of that priest-ridden court at Byzantium. Moreover, the stationaries are mine already. So are the soldiery all the way up the Nile. Ah! you have been fancying me idle for these four months, but — You forget that you yourself were the prize of my toil. Could I be a sluggard with that goal in sight?"

Hypatia shuddered, but was silent; and Orestes went on: —

"I have unladen several of the wheat-ships for enormous largesses of bread: though those rascally monks of Tabenne had nearly forestalled my benevolence, and I was forced to bribe a deacon or two, buy up the stock they had sent down, and retail it again as my own. It is really most officious of them to persist in feeding gratuitously half the poor of the city! What possible business have they with Alexandria?

"The wish for popularity, I presume."

"Just so; and then what hold can the government have on a set of rogues whose stomachs are filled without our help?"

"Julian made the same complaint to the high priest of Galatia, in that priceless letter of his."

"Ah, you will set that all right, you know, shortly. Then again, I do not fear Cyril's power just now. He has injured himself deeply, I am happy to say, in the opinion of the wealthy and educated, by expelling the Jews. And as for his mob, exactly at the right moment, the deities — there are no monks here, so I can attribute my blessings to the right source — have sent us such a boon as may put them into as good a humour as we need."

"And what is that?" asked Hypatia.

"A white elephant."

"A white elephant?"

"Yes," he answered, mistaking or ignoring the tone of her answer. "A real, live, white elephant; a thing which has not been seen in Alexandria for a hundred years! It was passing through, with two tame tigers,

as a present to the boy at Byzantium, from some hundred-wived kinglet of the Hyperborean Taprobane, or other no-man's-land in the far East. I took the liberty of laying an embargo on them, and, after a little argumentation and a few hints of torture, elephant and tigers are at our service."

"And of what service are they to be?"

"My dearest madam — Conceive .... How are we to win the mob without a show? .... When were there more than two ways of gaining either the whole or part of the Roman empire — by force of arms, or force of trumpery? Can even you invent a third? The former is unpleasantly exciting, and hardly practicable just now. The latter remains; and, thanks to the white elephant, may be triumphantly successful. I have to exhibit something every week. The people are getting tired of that pantomime; and since the Jews were driven out, the fellow has grown stupid and lazy, having lost the more enthusiastic half of his spectators. As for horse-racing, they are sick of it. .... Now, suppose we announce, for the earliest possible day — a spectacle — such a spectacle as never was seen before in this generation. You and I — I as exhibitor, you as representative — for the time being only — of the Vestals of old — sit side by side .... Some worthy friend has his instructions, when the people are beside themselves with rapture, to cry, 'Long live Orestes Cæsar!' .... Another reminds them of Heraclian's victory — another couples your name with mine .... the people applaud .... some Mark Antony steps forward, salutes me as Imperator, Augustus — what you will — the cry is taken up — I refuse as meekly as Julius Cæsar himself — am compelled, blush-

ing, to accept the honour — I rise, make an oration about the future independence of the southern continent — union of Africa and Egypt — the empire no longer to be divided into Eastern and Western, but Northern and Southern. Shouts of applause, at two drachmas per man, shake the skies. Everybody believes that everybody else approves, and follows the lead .... And the thing is won."

"And pray," asked Hypatia, crushing down her contempt and despair, "how is this to bear on the worship of the gods?"

"Why .... why .... if you thought that people's minds were sufficiently prepared, you might rise in your turn, and make an oration — you can conceive one. Set forth how these spectacles, formerly the glory of the empire, had withered under Galilæan superstition .... How the only path toward the full enjoyment of eye and ear was a frank return to those deities, from whose worship they originally sprung, and connected with which they could alone be enjoyed in their perfection. .... But I need not teach you how to do that which you have so often taught me: so now to consider our spectacle, which, next to the largess, is the most important part of our plans. I ought to have exhibited to them the monk who so nearly killed me yesterday. That would indeed have been a triumph of the laws over Christianity. He and the wild beasts might have given the people ten minutes' amusement. But wrath conquered prudence; and the fellow has been crucified these two hours. Suppose, then, we had a little exhibition of gladiators. They are forbidden by law, certainly."

"Thank Heaven, they are!"

"But do you not see that is the very reason why we, to assert our own independence, should employ them?"

"No! they are gone. Let them never reappear to disgrace the earth."

"My dear lady, you must not, in your present character, say that in public; lest Cyril should be impertinent enough to remind you that Christian emperors and bishops put them down."

Hypatia bit her lip, and was silent.

"Well, I do not wish to urge anything unpleasant to you .... If we could but contrive a few martyrdoms — but I really fear we must wait a year or two longer, in the present state of public opinion, before we can attempt that.

"Wait? wait for ever! Did not Julian — and he must be our model — forbid the persecution of the Galilæans, considering them sufficiently punished by their own atheism and self-tormenting superstition?"

"Another small error of that great man. He should have recollected that for three hundred years, nothing, not even the gladiators themselves, had been found to put the mob in such good humour as to see a few Christians, especially young and handsome women, burned alive, or thrown to the lions."

Hypatia bit her lip once more. "I can hear no more of this, sir. You forget that you are speaking to a woman."

"Most supreme wisdom," answered Orestes, in his blandest tone, "you cannot suppose that I wish to pain your ears. But allow me to observe, as a general theorem, that if one wishes to effect any purpose, it is necessary to use the means; and on the whole, those

which have been tested by four hundred years' experience will be the safest. I speak as a plain practical statesman — but surely your philosophy will not dissent?"

Hypatia looked down in painful thought. What could she answer? Was it not too true? and had not Orestes fact and experience on his side?

"Well, if you must — but I cannot have gladiators. Why not a — one of those battles with wild beasts? They are disgusting enough: but still they are less inhuman than the others; and you might surely take precautions to prevent the men being hurt."

"Ah! that would indeed be a scentless rose! If there is neither danger nor bloodshed, the charm is gone. But really wild beasts are too expensive just now; and if I kill down my present menagerie, I can afford no more. Why not have something which costs no money, like prisoners?"

"What! do you rank human beings below brutes?"

"Heaven forbid! But they are practically less expensive. Remember, that without money, we are powerless; we must husband our resources for the cause of the gods."

Hypatia was silent.

"Now, there are fifty or sixty Libyan prisoners just brought in from the desert. Why not let them fight an equal number of soldiers? They are rebels to the empire, taken in war."

"Ah, then," said Hypatia, catching at any thread of self-justification, "their lives are forfeit in any case."

"Of course. So the Christians could not complain of us for that. Did not the most Christian Emperor

Constantine set some three hundred German prisoners to butcher each other in the amphitheatre of Treves?"

"But they refused, and died like heroes, each falling on his own sword."

"Ah — those Germans are always unmanageable. My guards, now, are just as stiffnecked. To tell you the truth, I have asked them already to exhibit their prowess on these Libyans, and what do you suppose they answered?"

"They refused, I hope."

"They told me in the most insolent tone that they were men, and not stage-players; and hired to fight, and not to butcher. I expected a Socratic dialogue after such a display of dialectic, and bowed myself out."

"They were right."

"Not a doubt of it, from a philosophic point of view; from a practical one they were great pedants, and I an ill-used master. However, I can find unfortunate and misunderstood heroes enough in the prisons, who, for the chance of their liberty, will acquit themselves valiantly enough; and I know of a few old gladiators still lingering about the wineshops, who will be proud enough to give them a week's training. So that may pass. Now for some lighter species of representation to follow — something more or less dramatic."

"You forget that you speak to one who trusts to be, as soon as she has the power, the high-priestess of Athene, and who in the mean while is bound to obey her tutor Julian's commands to the priests of his day, and imitate the Galilæans as much in their abhorrence for the theatre as she hopes hereafter to do in their care for the widow and the stranger."

"Far be it from me to impugn that great man's

wisdom. But allow me to remark, that to judge by the present state of the empire, one has a right to say that he failed."

"The Sun-God whom he loved took him to himself, too early, by a hero's death."

"And the moment he was removed, the wave of Christian barbarism rolled back again into its old channel."

"Ah! had he but lived twenty years longer!"

"The Sun-God, perhaps, was not so solicitous as we are for the success of his high-priest's projects."

Hypatia reddened — was Orestes, after all, laughing in his sleeve at her and her hopes?

"Do not blaspheme!" she said, solemnly.

"Heaven forbid! I only offer one possible explanation of a plain fact. The other is, that as Julian was not going quite the right way to work to restore the worship of the Olympians, the Sun-God found it expedient to withdraw him from his post, and now sends in his place Hypatia the philosopher, who will be wise enough to avoid Julian's error, and not copy the Galilæans too closely, by imitating a severity of morals at which they are the only true and natural adepts."

"So Julian's error was that of being too virtuous? If it be so, let me copy him, and fail like him. The fault will then not be mine but fate's."

"Not in being too virtuous himself, most stainless likeness of Athene, but in trying to make others so. He forgot one half of Juvenal's great dictum about 'Panem and Circenses,' as the absolute and overruling necessities of rulers. He tried to give the people the bread without the games. . . . And what thanks he

received for his enormous munificence, let himself and the good folks of Antioch tell — you just quoted his Misopogon —"

"Ay — the lament of a man too pure for his age."

"Exactly so. He should rather have been content to keep his purity to himself, and have gone to Antioch not merely as a philosophic high-priest, with a beard of questionable cleanliness, to offer sacrifices to a god in whom — forgive me — nobody in Antioch had believed for many a year. If he had made his entrance with ten thousand gladiators, and our white elephant, built a theatre of ivory and glass in Daphnæ, and proclaimed games in honour of the Sun, or of any other member of the Pantheon —"

"He would have acted unworthily of a philosopher."

"But instead of that one priest draggling up, poor devil, through the wet grass to the deserted altar with his solitary goose under his arm, he would have had every goose in Antioch — forgive my stealing a pun from Aristophanes — running open-mouthed to worship any god, known or unknown — and to see the sights."

"Well," said Hypatia, yielding perforce to Orestes's cutting arguments. "Let us then restore the ancient glories of the Greek drama. Let us give them a trilogy of Æschylus or Sophocles."

"Too calm, my dear madam. The Eumenides might do certainly, or Philoctetes, if we could but put Philoctetes to real pain, and make the spectators sure that he was yelling in good earnest."

"Disgusting!"

"But necessary, like many disgusting things."

"Why not try the Prometheus?"

"A magnificent field for stage effect, certainly. What with those ocean nymphs in their winged chariot, and Ocean on his griffin. . . . But I should hardly think it safe to re-introduce Zeus and Hermes to the people under the somewhat ugly light in which Æschylus exhibits them."

"I forgot that," said Hypatia. "The Orestean trilogy will be best, after all."

"Best? perfect — divine! Ah, that it were to be my fate to go down to posterity as the happy man who once more revived Æschylus's masterpieces on a Grecian stage! But — Is there not, begging the pardon of the great tragedian, too much reserve in the Agamemnon for our modern taste? If we could have the bath scene represented on the stage, and an Agamemnon who could be really killed — though I would not insist on that, because a good actor might make it a reason for refusing the part — but still the murder ought to take place in public."

"Shocking! an outrage on all the laws of the drama. Does not even the Roman Horace lay down as a rule the — *Nec pueros coram populo Medea trucidet?*"

"Fairest and wisest, I am as willing a pupil of the dear old Epicurean as any man living — even to the furnishing of my chamber; of which fact the Empress of Africa may some day assure herself. But we are not now discussing the art of poetry, but the art of reigning; and, after all, while Horace was sitting in his easy-chair, giving his countrymen good advice, a private man, who knew somewhat better than he what

the mass admired, was exhibiting forty thousand gladiators at his mother's funeral."

"But the canon has its foundation in the eternal laws of beauty. It has been accepted and observed."

"Not by the people for whom it was written. The learned Hypatia has surely not forgotten, that within sixty years after the Ars Poetica was written, Annæus Seneca, or whosoever wrote that very bad tragedy called the Medea, found it so necessary that she should, in despite of Horace, kill her children before the people, that he actually made her do it!"

Hypatia was still silent — foiled at every point, while Orestes ran on with provoking glibness.

"And consider, too, even if we dare alter Æschylus a little, we could find no one to act him."

"Ah, true! fallen, fallen days!"

"And really, after all, omitting the questionable compliment to me, as candidate for a certain dignity, of having my namesake kill his mother, and then be hunted over the stage by furies —"

"But Apollo vindicates and purifies him at last. What a noble occasion that last scene would give for winning them back to their old reverence for the god!"

"True, but at present the majority of spectators will believe more strongly in the horrors of matricide and furies than in Apollo's power to dispense therewith. So that I fear must be one of your labours of the future."

"And it shall be," said Hypatia. But she did not speak cheerfully.

"Do you not think, moreover," went on the tempter, "that those old tragedies might give somewhat too gloomy a notion of those deities whom we wish to re-

introduce — I beg pardon, to re-honour? The history of the house of Atreus is hardly more cheerful, in spite of its beauty, than one of Cyril's sermons on the day of judgment, and the Tartarus prepared for hapless rich people?"

"Well," said Hypatia, more and more listlessly; "it might be more prudent to show them first the fairer and more graceful side of the old Myths. Certainly the great age of Athenian tragedy had its playful reverse in the old comedy."

"And in certain Dionysiac sports and processions which shall be nameless, in order to awaken a proper devotion for the gods in those who might not be able to appreciate Æschylus and Sophocles."

"You would not re-introduce them?"

"Pallas forbid! but give as fair a substitute for them as we can."

"And are we to degrade ourselves because the masses are degraded?"

"Not in the least. For my own part, this whole business, like the catering for the weekly pantomimes, is as great a bore to me as it could have been to Julian himself. But, my dearest madam — 'Panem and Circenses' — they must be put into good humour; and there is but one way — by 'the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,' as a certain Galilæan correctly defines the time-honoured Roman method."

"Put them into good humour? I wish to lustrate them afresh for the service of the gods. If we must have comic representations, we can only have them conjoined to tragedy, which, as Aristotle defines it, will purify their affections by pity and terror."

Orestes smiled.

"I certainly can have no objection to so good a purpose. But do you not think that the battle between the gladiators and the Lybians will have done that sufficiently beforehand? I can conceive nothing more fit for that end, unless it be Nero's method of sending his guards among the spectators themselves, and throwing them down to the wild beasts in the arena. How thoroughly purified by pity and terror must every worthy shopkeeper have been, when he sat uncertain whether he might not follow his fat wife into the claws of the nearest lion!"

"You are pleased to be witty, sir," said Hypatia, hardly able to conceal her disgust.

"My dearest bride elect, I only meant the most harmless of reductiones ad absurdum of an abstract canon of Aristotle, with which I, who am a Platonist after my mistress's model, do not happen to agree. But do, I beseech you, be ruled, not by me, but by your own wisdom. You cannot bring the people to appreciate your designs at the first sight. You are too wise, too pure, too lofty, too farsighted for them. And therefore you must get power to compel them. Julian, after all, found it necessary to compel — if he had lived seven years more he would have found it necessary to persecute."

"The gods forbid that — that such a necessity should ever arise here."

"The only way to avoid it, believe me, is to allure and to indulge. After all, it is for their good."

"True," sighed Hypatia. "Have your way, sir."

"Believe me, you shall have yours in turn. I ask

you to be ruled by me now, only that you may be in a position to rule me and Africa hereafter."

"And such an Africa! Well, if they are born low and earthly, they must, I suppose, be treated as such; and the fault of such a necessity is Nature's, and not ours. — Yet it is most degrading! — But still, if the only method by which the philosophic few can assume their rights, as the divinely appointed rulers of the world, is by indulging those lower beings whom they govern for their good — why be it so. It is no worse necessity than many another which the servant of the gods must endure in days like these."

"Ah," said Orestes, refusing to hear the sigh, or to see the bitterness of the lip, which accompanied the speech — "now Hypatia is herself again; and my counsellor, and giver of deep and celestial reasons for all things at which poor I can only snatch and guess by vulpine cunning. So now for our lighter entertainment. What shall it be?"

"What you will, provided it be not, as most such are, unfit for the eyes of modest women. I have no skill in catering for folly."

"A pantomime, then? We may make that as grand and as significant as we will, and expend too on it all our treasures in the way of gewgaws and wild beasts."

"As you like."

"Just consider, too, what a scope for mythologic learning a pantomime affords. Why not have a triumph of some deity? Could I commit myself more boldly to the service of the gods. Now — who shall it be?"

"Pallas — unless, as I suppose, she is too modest and too sober for your Alexandrians?"

"Yes — it does not seem to me that she would be appreciated — at all events for the present. Why not try Aphrodite? Christians as well as Pagans will thoroughly understand her; and I know no one who would not degrade the virgin goddess by representing her, except a certain lady, who has already, I hope, consented to sit in that very character, by the side of her too much honoured slave; and one Pallas is enough at a time in any theatre."

Hypatia shuddered. He took it all for granted, then — and claimed her conditional promise to the uttermost. Was there no escape? She longed to spring up and rush away, into the streets, into the desert — anything to break the hideous net which she had wound around herself. And yet — was it not the cause of the gods — the one object of her life? And after all, if he the hateful was to be her emperor, she at least was to be an empress; and do what she would — and half in irony, and half in the attempt to hurl herself perforce into that which she knew that she must go through, and forget misery in activity, she answered as cheerfully as she could,

"Then, my goddess, thou must wait the pleasure of these base ones! At least the young Apollo will have charms even for them."

"Ay, but who will represent him? This puny generation does not produce such figures as Pylades and Bathyllus — except among those Goths. Besides, Apollo must have golden hair; and our Greek race has intermixed itself so shamefully with these Egyptians, that our stage-troop is as dark as Andromeda,

and we should have to apply again to those accursed Goths, who have nearly" (with a bow) "all the beauty, and nearly all the money and the power, and will, I suspect, have the rest of it before I am safe out of this wicked world, because they have not nearly, but quite, all the courage. Now — Shall we ask a Goth to dance Apollo? for we can get no one else."

Hypatia smiled in spite of herself at the notion. "That would be too shameful! I must forego the god of light himself, if I am to see him in the person of a clumsy barbarian."

"Then why not try my despised and rejected Aphrodite? Suppose we had her triumph, finishing with a dance of Venus Anadyomene. Surely that is a graceful myth enough."

"As a myth; but on the stage, in reality?"

"Not worse than what this Christian city has been looking at for many a year. We shall not run any danger of corrupting morality, be sure."

Hypatia blushed.

"Then you must not ask for my help."

"Or for your presence at the spectacle? For that be sure is a necessary point. You are too great a person, my dearest madam, in the eyes of these good folks to be allowed to absent yourself on such an occasion. If my little stratagem succeeds, it will be half owing to the fact of the people knowing that in crowning me, they crown Hypatia. . . . . Come now — do you not see that as you must needs be present at their harmless scrap of mythology, taken from the authentic and undoubted histories of those very gods whose worship we intend to restore, you will consult your own comfort most in agreeing to it cheerfully,

and in lending me your wisdom towards arranging it? Just conceive now, a triumph of Aphrodite, entering preceded by wild beasts led in chains by Cupids, the white elephant and all — what a field for the plastic art! You might have a thousand groupings, dispersions, regroupings, in as perfect bas-relief style as those of any Sophoclean drama. Allow me only to take this paper and pen" —

And he began sketching rapidly group after group.

"Not so ugly, surely?"

"They are very lovely, I cannot deny," said poor Hypatia.

"Ah, sweetest Empress! you forget sometimes that I, too, world-worn as I am, am a Greek, with as intense a love of the beautiful as even you yourself have. Do not fancy that every violation of correct taste does not torture me as keenly as it does you. Some day, I hope, you will have learnt to pity and to excuse the wretched compromise between that which ought to be and that which can be, in which we hapless statesmen must struggle on, half-stunted, and wholly misunderstood — Ah, well! Look, now, at these fauns and dryads among the shrubs upon the stage, pausing in startled wonder at the first blast of music which proclaims the exit of the goddess from her temple."

"The temple? Why, where are you going to exhibit?"

"In the Theatre, of course. Where else pantomimes?"

"But will the spectators have time to move all the way from the Amphitheatre after that — those —?"

"The Amphitheatre? We shall exhibit the Libyans, too, in the Theatre."

"Combats in the Theatre sacred to Dionusos?"

"My dear lady" — penitently — "I know it is an offence against all the laws of the drama."

"Oh, worse than that! Consider what an impiety toward the god, to desecrate his altar with bloodshed!"

"Fairest devotee, recollect that, after all, I may fairly borrow Dionusos' altar in this my extreme need; for I saved its very existence for him, by preventing the magistrates from filling up the whole orchestra with benches for the patricians, after the barbarous Roman fashion. And besides, what possible sort of representation, or misrepresentation, has not been exhibited in every theatre of the empire for the last four hundred years? Have we not had tumblers, conjurers, allegories, martyrdoms, marriages, elephants on the tight rope, learned horses, and learned asses too, if we may trust Apuleius of Madaura; with a good many other spectacles of which we must not speak in the presence of a vestal? It is an age of execrable taste, and we must act accordingly."

"Ah!" answered Hypatia; "the first step in the downward career of the drama began when the successors of Alexander dared to profane theatres which had re-echoed the choruses of Sophocles and Euripides by degrading the altar of Dionusos into a stage for pantomimes!"

"Which your pure mind must, doubtless, consider not so very much better than a little fighting. But after all, the Ptolemies could not do otherwise. You can only have Sophoclean dramas in a Sophoclean

age; and theirs was no more of one than ours is, and so the drama died a natural death; and when that happens to man or thing, you may weep over it if you will, but you must, after all, bury it, and get something else in its place — except, of course, the worship of the gods."

"I am glad that you except that, at least," said Hypatia, somewhat bitterly. "But why not use the amphitheatre for both spectacles?"

"What can I do? I am over head and ears in debt already; and the amphitheatre is half in ruins, thanks to that fanatic edict of the late emperor's against gladiators. There is no time or money for repairing it; and besides, how pitiful a poor hundred of combatants will look in an arena built to hold two thousand. Consider, my dearest lady, in what fallen times we live!"

"I do, indeed!" said Hypatia. "But I will not see the altar polluted by blood. It is the desecration which it has undergone already which has provoked the god to withdraw the poetic inspiration."

"I do not doubt the fact. Some curse from Heaven, certainly, has fallen on our poets, to judge by their exceeding badness. Indeed, I am inclined to attribute the insane vagaries of the water-drinking monks and nuns, like those of the Argive women, to the same celestial anger. But I will see that the sanctity of the altar is preserved, by confining the combat to the stage. And as for the pantomime which will follow, if you would only fall in with my fancy of the triumph of Aphrodite, Dionusos would hardly refuse his altar for the glorification of his own lady-love."

"Ah — that myth is a late, and in my opinion a degraded one."

"Be it so: but recollect, that another myth makes her, and not without reason, the mother of all living beings. Be sure that Dionusos will have no objection, or any other god either, to allow her to make her children feel her conquering might; for they all know well enough, that if we can once get her well worshipped here, all Olympus will follow in her train."

"That was spoken of the celestial Aphrodite, whose symbol is the tortoise, the emblem of domestic modesty and chastity: not of that baser Pandemic one."

"Then we will take care to make the people aware of whom they are admiring by exhibiting in the triumph whole legions of tortoises; and you yourself shall write the chant, while I will see that the chorus is worthy of what it has to sing. No mere squeaking double flute and a pair of boys: but a whole army of cyclops and graces, with such trebles, and such bass-voices! It shall make Cyril's ears tingle in his palace!"

"The chant? A noble office for me, truly! That is the very part of the absurd spectacle to which you used to say the people never dreamed of attending. All which is worth settling you seem to have settled for yourself before you deigned to consult me."

"I said so? Surely you must mistake. But if any hired poetaster's chant do pass unheeded, what has that to do with Hypatia's eloquence and science, glowing with the treble inspiration of Athene, Phœbus, and Dionusos? And as for having arranged beforehand — my adorable mistress, what more delicate compliment could I have paid you?"

"I cannot say that it seems to me to be one."

"How? After saving you every trouble which I could, and racking my overburdened wits for stage-effects and properties, have I not brought hither the darling children of my own brain, and laid them down ruthlessly, for life or death, before the judgment-seat of your lofty and unsparing criticism?"

Hypatia felt herself tricked: but there was no escape now.

"And who, pray, is to disgrace herself, and me, as Venus Anadyomene?"

"Ah! that is the most exquisite article in all my bill of fare! What if the kind gods have enabled me to exact a promise from — whom, think you?"

"What care I? How can I tell?" asked Hypatia, who suspected and dreaded that she could tell.

"Pelagia herself!"

Hypatia rose angrily.

"This, sir, at least, is too much! It was not enough for you, it seems, to claim, or rather to take for granted, so imperiously, so mercilessly, a conditional promise — weakly, weakly made, in the vain hope that you would help forward aspirations of mine which you have let lie fallow for months — in which I do not believe that you sympathize now! — It was not enough for you to declare yourself publicly yesterday a Christian, and to come hither this morning to flatter me into the belief that you will dare, ten days hence, to restore the worship of the gods whom you have abjured! — It was not enough to plan without me all those movements in which you told me I was to be your fellow-counsellor — the very condition which you yourself offered! — It was not enough for you to command me to sit in

that theatre, as your bait, your puppet, your victim, blushing and shuddering at sights unfit for the eyes of gods and men: — but, over and above all this, I must assist in the renewed triumph of a woman who has laughed down my teaching, seduced away my scholars, braved me in my very lecture-room — who for four years has done more than even Cyril himself to destroy all the virtue and truth which I have toiled to sow — and toiled in vain! Oh, beloved gods! where will end the tortures through which your martyr must witness for you to a fallen race?"

And, in spite of all her pride, and of Orestes' presence, her eyes filled with scalding tears.

Orestes' eyes had sunk before the vehemence of her just passion: but as she added the last sentence in a softer and sadder tone, he raised them again, with a look of sorrow and entreaty, as his heart whispered —

"Fool! — fanatic! But she is too beautiful! Win her I must and will!"

"Ah! dearest, noblest Hypatia! what have I done? Unthinking fool that I was! In the wish to save you trouble — in the hope that I could show you, by the aptness of my own plans, that my practical statesmanship was not altogether an unworthy helpmate for your loftier wisdom — wretch that I am, I have offended you; and I have ruined the cause of those very gods for whom, I swear, I am as ready to sacrifice myself as ever you can be!"

The last sentence had the effect which it was meant to have.

"Ruined the cause of the gods?" asked she, in a startled tone.

"Is it not ruined, without your help? And what am I to understand from your words but that — hapless man that I am! — you leave me and them henceforth to our own unassisted strength?"

"The unassisted strength of the gods is omnipotence."

"Be it so. But — why is Cyril, and not Hypatia, master of the masses of Alexandria this day? Why but because he and his have fought, and suffered, and died too, many a hundred of them, for their god, omnipotent as they believe him to be? Why are the old gods forgotten, my fairest logician? — for forgotten they are."

Hypatia trembled from head to foot, and Orestes went on more blandly than ever.

"I will not ask an answer to that question of mine. All I entreat is forgiveness for — what for I know not: but I have sinned, and that is enough for me. What if I have been too confident — too hasty? Are not you the prize for which I strain? and will not the preciousness of the victor's wreath excuse some impatience in his struggle for it? Hypatia has forgotten who and what the gods have made her — she has not even consulted her own mirror, when she blames one of her innumerable adorers for a forwardness which ought to be rather imputed to him as a virtue."

And Orestes stole meekly such a glance of adoration, that Hypatia blushed, and turned her face away. . . . . After all, she was woman. . . . . And she was a fanatic. . . . . And she was to be an empress. . . . . And Orestes's voice was as melodious, and his manner as graceful, as ever charmed the heart of woman.

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"But Pelagia?" she said, at last, recovering herself.

"Would that I had never seen the creature! But, after all, I really fancied that in doing what I have done I should gratify you."

"Me?"

"Surely if revenge be sweet, as they say, it could hardly find a more delicate satisfaction than in the degradation of one who —"

"Revenge, sir? Do you dream that I am capable of so base a passion?"

"I? Pallas forbid!" said Orestes, finding himself on the wrong path again. "But recollect that the allowing this spectacle to take place might rid you for ever of an unpleasant — I will not say rival."

"How, then?"

"Will not her reappearance on the stage, after all her proud professions of contempt for it, do something towards reducing her in the eyes of this scandalous little town to her true and native level? She will hardly dare thenceforth to go about parading herself as the consort of a god-descended hero, or thrusting herself unbidden into Hypatia's presence, as if she were the daughter of a consul."

"But I cannot — I cannot allow it even to her. After all, Orestes, she is a woman. And can I, philosopher as I am, help to degrade her even one step lower than she lies already?"

Hypatia had all but said "a woman even as I am;" but Neo-Platonic philosophy taught her better; and she checked the hasty assertion of anything like a common sex or common humanity between two beings so antipodal.

"Ah," rejoined Orestes, "that unlucky word degrade! Unthinking that I was, to use it, forgetting that she herself will be no more degraded in her own eyes, or any one's else, by hearing again the plaudits of those 'dear Macedonians,' on whose breath she has lived for years, than a peacock when he displays his train. Unbounded vanity and self-conceit are not unpleasant passions, after all, for their victim. After all, she is what she is, and her being so is no fault of yours. Oh, it must be! indeed it must!"

Poor Hypatia! The bait was too delicate, the tempter too wily; and yet she was ashamed to speak aloud the philosophic dogma which flashed a ray of comfort and resignation through her mind, and reminded her that after all there was no harm in allowing lower natures to develop themselves freely in that direction which Nature had appointed for them, and in which only they could fulfil the laws of their being, as necessary varieties in the manifold whole of the universe. So she cut the interview short with —

"If it must be, then .... I will now retire, and write the ode. Only, I refuse to have any communication whatsoever with — I am ashamed of even mentioning her name. I will send the ode to you, and she must adapt her dance to it as best she can. By her taste, or fancy rather, I will not be ruled."

"And I," said Orestes, with a profusion of thanks, "will retire to rack my faculties over the 'dispositions.' On this day week we exhibit — and conquer! Farewell, queen of wisdom! Your philosophy never shows to better advantage than when you thus wisely and gracefully subordinate that which is beautiful in itself to that which is beautiful relatively and practically."

He departed; and Hypatia, half dreading her own thoughts, sat down at once to labour at the ode. Certainly it was a magnificent subject. What etymologies, cosmogonies, allegories, myths, symbolisms between all heaven and earth, might she not introduce — if she could but banish that figure of Pelagia dancing to it all, which would not be banished, but hovered, like a spectre, in the background of all her imaginations. She became quite angry, first with Pelagia, then with herself for being weak enough to think of her. Was it not positive defilement of her mind to be haunted by the image of so defiled a being? She would purify her thoughts by prayer and meditation. But to whom of all the gods should she address herself? To her chosen favourite, Athene? She who had promised to be present at that spectacle? Oh, how weak she had been to yield! And yet she had been snared into it. Snared — there was no doubt of it — by the very man whom she had fancied that she could guide and mould to her own purposes. He had guided and moulded her now against her self-respect, her compassion, her innate sense of right. Already she was his tool. True, she had submitted to be so for a great purpose. But suppose she had to submit again hereafter — always henceforth? And what made the thought more poignant was, her knowledge that he was right; that he knew what to do, and how to do it. She could not help admiring him for his address, his quickness, his clear practical insight: and yet she despised, mistrusted, all but hated him. But what if his were the very qualities which were destined to succeed? What if her purer and loftier aims, her resolutions — now, alas, broken — never to act but on

the deepest and holiest principles and by the most sacred means, were destined never to exert themselves in practice, except conjointly with miserable stratagems and cajoleries such as these? What if statecraft, and not philosophy and religion, were the appointed rulers of mankind? Hideous thought! And yet — she who had all her life tried to be self-dependent, originative, to face and crush the hostile mob of circumstance and custom, and do battle single-handed with Christianity and a fallen age — how was it that in her first important and critical opportunity of action she had been dumb, irresolute, passive, the victim, at last, of the very corruption which she was to exterminate? She did not know yet that those who have no other means for regenerating a corrupted time than dogmatic pedantries concerning the dead and unreturning past, must end, in practice, by borrowing insincerely, and using clumsily, the very weapons of that novel age which they deprecate, and "sewing new cloth into old garments," till the rent become patent and incurable. But in the mean while, such meditations as these drove from her mind for that day both Athene, and the ode, and philosophy, and all things but — Pelagia the wanton.

In the mean while, Alexandrian politics flowed onward in their usual pure and quiet course. The public buildings were placarded with the news of Heraclian's victory; and groups of loungers expressed, loudly enough, their utter indifference as to who might rule at Rome — or even at Byzantium. Let Heraclian or Honorius be emperor, the capitals must be fed; and while the Alexandrian wheat-trade was uninjured, what matter who received the tribute? Certainly, as some

friends of Orestes found means to suggest, it might not be a bad thing for Egypt, if she could keep the tribute in her own treasury, instead of sending it to Rome without any adequate return, save the presence of an expensive army. . . . Alexandria had been once the metropolis of an independent empire. . . . Why not again? Then came enormous largesses of corn, proving, more satisfactorily to the mob than to the shipowners, that Egyptian wheat was better employed at home than abroad. Nay, there were even rumours of a general amnesty for all prisoners; and as, of course, every evil-doer had a kind of fiiend, who considered him an injured martyr, all parties were well content, on their own accounts at least, with such a move.

And so Orestes's bubble swelled, and grew, and glittered every day with fresh prismatic radiance; while Hypatia sat at home, with a heavy heart, writing her ode to Venus Urania, and submitting to Orestes's daily visits.

One cloud, indeed, not without squalls of wind and rain, disfigured that sky which the prefect had invested with such serenity by the expedient, well-known to politicians, of painting it bright blue, since it would not assume that colour of its own accord. For, a day or two after Ammonius's execution, the prefect's guards informed him that the corpse of the crucified man, with the cross on which it hung, had vanished. The Nitrian monks had come down in a body, and carried them off before the very eyes of the sentinels. Orestes knew well enough that the fellows must have been bribed to allow the theft; but he dare not say so to men on whose good humour his very life might depend: so, stomaching the affront as best he could, he vowed fresh

vengeance against Cyril, and went on his way. But, behold! — within four-and-twenty hours of the theft, a procession of all the rascality, followed by all the piety, of Alexandria, — monks from Nitria counted by the thousand, — priests, deacons, archdeacons, Cyril himself, in full pontificals, and, borne aloft in the midst, upon a splendid bier, the missing corpse, its nail-pierced hands and feet left uncovered for the pitying gaze of the Church.

Under the very palace windows, from which Orestes found it expedient to retire for the time being, out upon the quays, and up the steps of the Cæsareum, defiled that new portent; and in another half-hour, a servant entered, breathlessly, to inform the shepherd of people, that his victim was lying in state in the centre of the nave, a martyr duly canonized, — Ammonius now no more, but henceforth Thaumasius the wonderful, on whose heroic virtues and more heroic faithfulness unto the death, Cyril was already descanting from the pulpit, amid thunders of applause at every allusion to Sisera at the brook Kishon, Sennacherib in the house of Nisroch, and the rest of the princes of this world who come to nought.

Here was a storm! To order a cohort to enter the church and bring away the body, was easy enough: to make them do it, in the face of certain death, not so easy. Besides, it was too early yet for so desperate a move as would be involved in the violation of a church. ... So Orestes added this fresh item to the long column of accounts which he intended to settle with the patriarch; cursed for half an hour in the name of all divinities, saints and martyrs, Christian and Pagan; and wrote off a lamentable history of his wrongs and

sufferings to the very Byzantine court against which he was about to rebel, in the comfortable assurance that Cyril had sent, by the same post, a counterstatement, contradicting it in every particular. . . . Never mind. . . . In case he failed in rebelling, it was as well to be able to prove his allegiance up to the latest possible date; and the more completely the two statements contradicted each other, the longer it would take to sift the truth out of them; and thus so much time was gained, and so much the more chance, meantime, of a new leaf being turned over in that Sibylline oracle of politicians — the Chapter of Accidents. And, for the time being, he would make a pathetic appeal to respectability and moderation in general, of which Alexandria, wherein some hundred thousand tradesmen and merchants had property to lose, possessed a goodly share.

Respectability responded promptly to the appeal; and loyal addresses and deputations of condolence flowed in from every quarter, expressing the extreme sorrow with which the citizens had beheld the late disturbances of civil order, and the contempt which had been so unfortunately evinced for the constituted authorities: but taking, nevertheless, the liberty to remark that while the extreme danger to property which might ensue from the further exasperation of certain classes, prevented their taking those active steps on the side of tranquillity to which their feelings inclined them, the known piety and wisdom of their esteemed patriarch made it presumptuous in them to offer any opinion on his present conduct, beyond the expression of their firm belief that he had been unfortunately misinformed as to those sentiments of affec-

tion and respect which his excellency the prefect was well known to entertain towards him. They ventured therefore, to express a humble hope that, by some mutual compromise, to define which would be an unwarrantable intrusion on their part, a happy reconciliation would be effected, and the stability of law, property, and the Catholic Faith, ensured. . . . . All which Orestes heard with blandest smiles, while his heart was black with curses; and Cyril answered by a very violent though a very true and practical harangue on the text, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven."

So respectability and moderation met with its usual hapless fate, and, soundly cursed by both parties, in the vain attempt to please both, wisely left the upper powers to settle their own affairs, and went home to their desks and counters, and did a very brisk business all that week, on the strength of the approaching festival. One hapless innkeeper only tried to carry out in practice the principles which the deputation from his guild had so eloquently advocated, and being convicted of giving away bread in the morning to the Nitrian monks, and wine in the evening to the prefect's guards, had his tavern gutted, and his head broken, by a joint plebiscitum of both the parties whom he had conciliated, who afterwards fought a little together, and then, luckily for the general peace, mutually ran away from each other.

Cyril in the mean while, though he was doing a foolish thing, was doing it wisely enough. Orestes might curse, and respectability might deplore, those nightly sermons, which shook the mighty arcades of the Cæsareum, but they could not answer them. Cyril was

right, and knew that he was right. Orestes was a scoundrel, hateful to God and to the enemies of God. The middle classes were lukewarm covetous cowards; the whole system of government was a swindle and an injustice; all men's hearts were mad with crying, "Lord how long?" The fierce bishop had only to thunder forth text on text, from every book of scripture, old and new, in order to array on his side not merely the common sense and right feeling, but the bigotry and ferocity of the masses.

In vain did the good Arsenius represent to him not only the scandal but the unrighteousness of his new canonization. "I must have fuel, my good father," was his answer, "wherewith to keep alight the flame of zeal. If I am to be silent as to Heraclian's defeat, I must give them some other irritant, which will put them in a proper temper to act on that defeat, when they are told of it. If they hate Orestes, does he not deserve it? Even if he is not altogether as much in the wrong in this particular case as they fancy he is, are there not a thousand other crimes of his, which deserve their abhorrence even more? At all events, he must proclaim the empire, as you yourself say, or we shall have no handle against him. He will not dare to proclaim it, if he knows that we are aware of the truth. And if we are to keep the truth in reserve, we must have something else to serve meanwhile as a substitute for it."

And poor Arsenius submitted with a sigh, as he saw Cyril making a fresh step in that alluring path of evil-doing that good might come, which led him in after years into many a fearful sin, and left his name disgraced, perhaps for ever, in the judgment of genera-

tions, who know as little of the pandemonium against which he fought, as they do of the intense belief which sustained him in his warfare; and who have therefore neither understanding nor pardon for the occasional outrages and errors of a man no worse, even if no better, than themselves.

stunned in me. But there is no resolution, no unanimity left in the land. The soldiery are scattered in small garrisons, employed entirely in protecting the private property of their officers. The Ausurians defeat them piecemeal, and, armed with their spoils, actually have begun to beleaguer fortified towns; and now there is nothing left for us, but to pray that, like Ulysses, we may be devoured the last. What am I doing? I am selfishly pouring out my own sorrows, instead of listening to yours."

"Nay, friend, you are talking of the sorrows of your country, not of your own. As for me, I have no sorrow — only a despair: which, being irremediable, may well wait. But you — oh, you must not stay here. Why not escape to Alexandria?"

"I will die at my post, as I have lived, the father of my people. When the last ruin comes, and Cyrene itself is besieged, I shall return thither from my present outpost, and the conquerors shall find the bishop in his place before the altar. There I have offered for years the unbloody sacrifice to Him, who will perhaps require of me a bloody one, that so the sight of an altar, polluted by the murder of his priest, may end the sum of Pentapolitan woe, and arouse Him to avenge his slaughtered sheep! There, we will talk no more of it. This at least I have left in my power, to make you welcome. And after supper you shall tell me what brings you hither."

And the good bishop, calling his servants, set to work to show his guest such hospitality as the invaders had left in his power.

Raphael's usual insight had not deserted him when,

in his utter perplexity, he went, almost instinctively, straight to Synesius. The Bishop of Cyrene, to judge from the charming private letters which he has left, was one of those many-sided, volatile, restless men, who taste joy and sorrow, if not deeply or permanently, yet abundantly and passionately. He lived, as Raphael had told Orestes, in a whirlwind of good deeds, meddling and toiling for the mere pleasure of action; and as soon as there was nothing to be done, which, till lately, had happened seldom enough with him, paid the penalty for past excitement in fits of melancholy. A man of magniloquent and flowery style, not without a vein of self-conceit; yet withal of overflowing kindliness, racy humour, and unflinching courage, both physical and moral, with a very clear practical faculty, and a very muddy speculative one — though, of course like the rest of the world, he was especially proud of his own weakest side, and professed the most passionate affection for philosophic meditation; while his detractors hinted, not without a show of reason, that he was far more of an adept in soldiering and dog-breaking than in the mysteries of the unseen world.

To him Raphael betook himself, he hardly knew why; certainly not for philosophic consolation; perhaps because Synesius was, as Raphael used to say, the only Christian from whom he had ever heard a hearty laugh; perhaps because he had some wayward hope, unconfessed even to himself, that he might meet at Synesius's house the very companions from whom he had just fled. He was fluttering round Victoria's new and strange brilliance, like a moth round the candle, as he confessed, after supper, to his host; and now he

was come hither, on the chance of being able to singe his wings once more.

Not that his confession was extracted without much trouble to the good old man, who seeing at once that Raphael had some weight upon his mind, which he longed to tell, and yet was either too suspicious or too proud to tell, set himself to ferret out the secret, and forgot all his sorrows for the time, as soon as he found a human being to whom he might do good. But Raphael was inexplicably wayward and unlike himself. All his smooth and shallow persiflage, even his shrewd satiric humour, had vanished. He seemed parched by some inward fever; restless, moody, abrupt, even peevish; and Synesius's curiosity rose with his disappointment, as Raphael went on obstinately declining to consult the very physician before whom he had presented himself as patient.

"And what can you do for me, if I did tell you?"

"Then allow me, my very dear friend, to ask this. As you deny having visited me on my own account, on what account did you visit me?"

"Can you ask? To enjoy the society of the most finished gentleman of Pentapolis."

"And was that worth a week's journey, in perpetual danger of death?"

"As for danger of death, that weighs little with a man who is careless of life. And as for the week's journey, I had a dream one night, on my way, which made me question whether I were wise in troubling a Christian bishop with any thoughts or questions which relate merely to poor human beings like myself, who marry and are given in marriage."

"You forget, friend, that you are speaking to one who has married, and loved — and lost."

"I did not. But you see how rude I am growing. I am no fit company for you, or any man. I believe I shall end by turning robber-chief, and heading a party of Ausurians."

"But," said the patient Synesius, "you have forgotten your dream all this while."

"Forgotten! I did not promise to tell it you — did I?"

"No; but as it seems to have contained some sort of accusation against my capacity, do you not think it but fair to tell the accused what it was?"

Raphael smiled.

"Well then. . . . Suppose I had dreamt this. That a philosopher, and academic, and a believer in nothing and in no man, had met at Berenice certain rabbis of the Jews, and heard them reading and expounding a certain book of Solomon — the Song of Songs. You, as a learned man, know into what sort of trumpery allegory they would contrive to twist it; how the bride's eyes were to mean the scribes who were full of wisdom, as the pools of Heshbon were of water; and her stature spreading like a palm-tree, the priests who spread out their hands when blessing the people; and the left hand which should be under her head, the Tephilim which these old pedants wore on their left wrists; and the right hand which should hold her, the Mezuzah which they fixed on the right side of their doors to keep off devils; and so forth."

"I have heard such silly Cabbalisms, certainly."

"You have? Then suppose that I went on, and saw in my dream how this same academic and unbe-

liever, being himself also a Hebrew of the Hebrews, snatched the roll out of the rabbi's hand, and told them that they were a party of fools for trying to set forth what the book might possibly mean, before they had found out what it really did mean; and that they could only find out that by looking honestly at the plain words to see what Solomon meant by it. And then, suppose that this same apostate Jew, this member of the synagogue of Satan, in his carnal and lawless imaginations, had waxed eloquent with the eloquence of devils, and told them, that the book set forth, to those who had eyes to see, how Solomon the great king, with his threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number, forgets all his seraglio and his luxury in pure and noble love for the undefiled, who is but one; and how as his eyes are opened to see that God made the one man for the one woman, and the one woman to the one man, even as it was in the garden of Eden, so all his heart and thoughts become pure, and gentle, and simple; how the song of the birds, and the scent of the grapes, and the spicy southern gales, and all the simple country pleasures of the glens of Lebanon, which he shares with his own vine-dressers and slaves, become more precious in his eyes than all his palaces and artificial pomp; and the man feels that he is in harmony, for the first time in his life, with the universe of God, and with the mystery of the seasons; that within him, as well as without him, the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land. . . . And suppose I saw in my dream how the rabbis, when they heard those wicked words, stopped their ears with one

ccord, and ran upon that son of Belial and cast him ut, because he blasphemed their sacred books by his arnal interpretations. And suppose — I only say ippose — that I saw in my dream how the poor man aid in his heart, 'I will go to the Christians; they acnowledge the sacredness of this same book; and they ay that their God taught them that "'in the beginning od made man, male and female."' Perhaps they will ell me whether this Song of Songs does not, as it eems to me to do, show the passage upwards from rutal polygamy to that monogamy which they so olemnly command, and agree with me, that it is beause the Song preaches this that it has a right to take s place among the holy writings?' You, as a Chrisan bishop, should know what answer such a man ould receive. . . . You are silent? Then I will tell ou what answer he seemed to receive in my dream. O blasphemous and carnal man, who pervertest oly Scripture into a cloak for thine own licentiousess, as if it spoke of man's base and sensual affecons, know that this book is to be spiritually interreted of the marriage between the soul and its reator, and that it is from this very book that the atholic Church derives her strongest arguments in avour of holy virginity, and the glories of a celibate fe.'"

Synesius was still silent.

"And what do you think I saw in my dream that at man did when he found these Christians enforcing, s a necessary article of practice, as well as of faith, a aseless and bombastic metaphor, borrowed from that ery Neo-Platonism out of which he had just fled for is life? He cursed the day he was born, and the hour

in which his father was told, 'Thou hast gotten a man-child,' and said, 'Philosophers, Jews, and Christians, farewell for ever and a day! The clearest words of your most sacred books mean anything or nothing, as the case may suit your fancies; and there is neither truth nor reason under the sun. What better is there for a man, than to follow the example of his people, and to turn usurer, and money-getter, and cajoler of fools in his turn, even as his father was before him?'"

Synesius remained a while in deep thought, and at last —

"And yet you came to me?"

"I did, because you have loved and married; because you have stood out manfully against this strange modern insanity, and refused to give up, when you were made a bishop, the wife whom God had given you. You, I thought, could solve the riddle for me, if any man could."

"Alas, friend! I have begun to distrust, of late, my power of solving riddles. After all, why should they be solved? What matters one more mystery in a world of mysteries? 'If thou marry, thou hast not sinned,' are St. Paul's own words; and let them be enough for us. Do not ask me to argue with you, but to help you. Instead of puzzling me with deep questions, and tempting me to set up my private judgment, as I have done too often already, against the opinion of the Church, tell me your story, and test my sympathy rather than my intellect. I shall feel with you and work for you, doubt not, even though I am unable to explain to myself why I do it."

"Then you cannot solve my riddle?"

"Let me help you," said Synesius, with a sweet smile, "to solve it for yourself. You need not try to deceive me. You have a love, an undefiled, who is but one. When you possess her, you will be able to judge better whether your interpretation of the Song is the true one; and if you still think that it is, Synesius, at least, will have no quarrel against you. He has always claimed for himself the right of philosophizing in private, and he will allow the same liberty to you, whether the mob do or not."

"Then you agree with me? Of course you do!"

"Is it fair to ask me whether I accept a novel interpretation, which I have only heard five minutes ago, delivered in a somewhat hasty and rhetorical form?"

"You are shirking the question," said Raphael, peevishly.

"And what if I am? Tell me, point-blank, most self-tormenting of men, can I help you in practice, even though I choose to leave you to yourself in speculation?"

"Well, then, if you will have my story, take it, and judge for yourself of Christian common sense."

And hurriedly, as if ashamed of his own confession, and yet compelled, in spite of himself, to unbosom it, he told Synesius all, from his first meeting with Victoria to his escape from her at Berenice.

The good bishop, to Aben-Ezra's surprise, seemed to treat the whole matter as infinitely amusing. He chuckled, smote his hand on his thigh, and nodded approval at every pause — perhaps to give the speaker courage — perhaps because he really thought that

Raphael's prospects were considerably less desperate than he fancied. . . . .

"If you laugh at me, Synesius, I am silent. It is quite enough to endure the humiliation of telling you that I am — confound it! — like any boy of sixteen."

"Laugh at you? — with you, you mean. A convent? Pooh, pooh! The old prefect has enough sense, I will warrant him, not to refuse a good match for his child."

"You forget that I have not the honour of being a Christian."

"Then we'll make you one. You won't let me convert you, I know; you always used to gibe and jeer at my philosophy. But Augustine comes to-morrow."

"Augustine?"

"He does indeed; and we must be off by day-break, with all the armed men we can muster, to meet and escort him, and to hunt, of course, going and coming, for we have had no food this fortnight but what our own dogs and bows have furnished us. He shall take you in hand, and cure you of all your Judaism in a week; and then just leave the rest to me; I will manage it somehow or other. It is sure to come right. No; do not be bashful. It will be real amusement to a poor wretch who can find nothing else to do — Heigho! And as for lying under an obligation to me, why we can square that by your lending me three or four thousand gold pieces — Heaven knows I want them! — on the certainty of never seeing them again."

Raphael could not help laughing in his turn.

"Synesius is himself still, I see, and not unworthy

of his ancestor Hercules; and though he shrinks from cleansing the Augean stable of my soul, paws like the war-horse in the valley at the hope of undertaking any lesser labours in my behalf. But, my dear generous bishop, this matter is more serious, and I, the subject of it, have become more serious also, than you fancy. Consider: by the uncorrupt honour of your Spartan forefathers, Agis, Brasidas, and the rest of them, don't you think that you are, in your hasty kindness, tempting me to behave in a way which they would have called somewhat rascally?"

"How then, my dear man? You have a very honourable and praiseworthy desire; and I am willing to help you to compass it."

"Do you think that I have not cast about before now for more than one method of compassing it for myself? My good man, I have been tempted a dozen times already to turn Christian: but there has risen up in me the strangest fancy about conscience and honour. . . . . I never was scrupulous before, Heaven knows — I am not over-scrupulous now — except about her. I cannot dissemble before her. I dare not look in her face when I had a lie in my right hand. . . . She looks through one — into one — like a clear-eyed awful goddess. . . . . I never was ashamed in my life till my eyes met hers." . . . .

"But if you really became a Christian?"

"I cannot. I should suspect my own motives. Here is another of these absurd soul-anatomizing scruples which have risen up in me. I should suspect that I had changed my creed because I wished to change it — that if I was not deceiving her I was deceiving myself. If I had not loved her it might

have been different: but now — just because I do love her, I will not, I dare not, listen to Augustine's arguments, or my own thoughts on the matter."

"Most wayward of men!" cried Synesius, half peevishly; "you seem to take some perverse pleasure in throwing yourself into the waves again, the instant you have climbed a rock of refuge!"

"Pleasure? is there any pleasure in feeling oneself at death-grips with the devil? I had given up believing in him for many a year . . . And behold, the moment that I awaken to anything noble and right, I find the old serpent live and strong at my throat! No wonder that I suspect him, you, myself — I, who have been tempted every hour in the last week, temptations to become a devil. Ay," he went on, raising his voice, as all the fire of his intense Eastern nature flashed from his black eyes, "to be a devil! From my childhood till now never have I known what it was to desire, and not to possess. It is not often that I have had to trouble any poor Naboth for his vineyard: but when I have taken a fancy to it, Naboth has always found it wiser to give way. And now . . . . Do you fancy that I have not had a dozen hellish plots flashing across me in the last week? Look here! This is the mortgage of her father's whole estate. I bought it — whether by the instigation of Satan or of God — of a banker in Berenice, the very day I left them; and now they, and every straw which they possess, are in my power. I can ruin them — sell them as slaves — betray them to death as rebels — and last, but not least, cannot I hire a dozen worthy men to carry her off, and cut the Gordian knot most simply and summarily? And yet

I dare not! I must be pure to approach the pure; and righteous, to kiss the feet of the righteous. Whence came this new conscience to me I know not; but come it has; and I dare no more do a base thing toward her, than I dare toward a God, if there be one. This very mortgage — I hate it, curse it, now that I possess it — the tempting devil!"

"Burn it," said Synesius, quietly.

"Perhaps I may. At least, used it never shall be. Compel her? I am too proud, or too honourable, or something or other, even to solicit her. She must come to me; tell me with her own lips that she loves me, that she will take me, and make me worthy of her. She must have mercy on me, of her own free will, or — let her pine and die in that accursed prison; and then a scratch with the trusty old dagger for her father, and another for myself, will save him from any more superstitions, and me from any more philosophic doubts, for a few æons of ages, till we start again in new lives — he, I suppose, as a jackass, and I as a baboon. What matter? but unless I possess her by fair means, God do so to me, and more also, if I attempt base ones!"

"God be with you, my son, in the noble warfare," said Synesius, his eyes filling with kindly tears.

"It is no noble warfare at all. It is a base, coward fear, in one who never before feared man or devil, and is now fallen low enough to be afraid of a helpless girl!"

"Not so," cried Synesius, in his turn; "it is a noble and a holy fear. You fear her goodness. Could you see her goodness, much less fear it, were there not a Divine Light within you which showed

you what, and how awful, goodness was? Tell me no more, Raphael Aben-Ezra, that you do not fear God; for he who fears Virtue, fears Him whose likeness Virtue is. Go on — go on .... Be brave, and His strength will be made manifest in your weakness."

* * * * *

It was late that night before Synesius compelled his guest to retire, after having warned him not to disturb himself if he heard the alarm-bell ring, as the house was well garrisoned, and having set the water-clock by which he and his servants measured their respective watches. And then the good bishop, having disposed his sentinels, took his station on the top of his tower, close by the warning bell; and as he looked out over the broad lands of his forefathers, and prayed that their desolation might come to an end at last, he did not forget to pray for the desolation of the guest who slept below, a happier and more healthy slumber than he had known for many a week. For before Raphael lay down that night, he had torn to shreds Majoricus's mortgage, and felt a lighter and a better man as he saw the cunning temptation consuming scrap by scrap in the lamp-flame. And then, wearied out with fatigue of body and mind, he forgot Synesius, Victoria, and the rest, and seemed to himself to wander all night among the vine-clad glens of Lebanon, amid the gardens of lilies, and the beds of spices; while shepherds' music lured him on and on, and girlish voices, chanting the mystic idyl of his mighty ancestor, rang soft and fitful through his weary brain.

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Before sunrise the next morning, Raphael was

faring forth gallantly, well armed and mounted, by Synesius's side, followed by four or five brace of tall brush-tailed greyhounds, and by the faithful Bran, whose lop-ears and heavy jaws, unique in that land of prick-ears and fox-noses, formed the absorbing subject of conversation among some twenty smart retainers, who, armed to the teeth for chase and war, rode behind the bishop on half-starved raw-boned horses, inured by desert training and bad times to do the maximum of work upon the minimum of food.

For the first few miles they rode in silence; through ruined villages, and desolated farms, from which here and there a single inhabitant peeped forth fearfully, to pour his tale of woe into the ears of the hapless bishop, and then, instead of asking alms from him, to entreat his acceptance of some paltry remnant of grain or poultry, which had escaped the hands of the marauders; and as they clung to his hands, and blessed him as their only hope and stay, poor Synesius heard patiently again and again the same purposeless tale of woe, and mingled his tears with theirs, and then spurred his horse on impatiently, as if to escape from the sight of misery which he could not relieve; while a voice in Raphael's heart seemed to ask him — "Why was thy wealth given to thee, but that thou mightest dry, if but for a day, such tears as these?"

And he fell into a meditation, which was not without its fruit in due season, but which lasted till they had left the enclosed country, and were climbing the slopes of the low rolling hills, over which lay the road from the distant sea. But as they left the signs of war behind them, the volatile temper of the good

bishop began to rise. He petted his hounds, chatted to his men, discoursed on the most probable quarter for finding game, and exhorted them cheerfully enough to play the man, as their chance of having anything to eat at night depended entirely on their prowess during the day.

"Ah," said Raphael at last, glad of a pretext for breaking his own chain of painful thought, "there is a vein of your land-salt. I suspect that you were all at the bottom of the sea once, and that the old earth-shaker Neptune, tired of your bad ways, gave you a lift one morning, and set you up as dry land, in order to be rid of you."

"It may really be so. They say that the Argonauts returned back through this country from the Southern Ocean, which must have been therefore far nearer us than it is now, and that they carried their mystic vessel over these very hills to the Syrtis. However, we have forgotten all about the sea thoroughly enough since that time. I well remember my first astonishment at the sight of a galley, in Alexandria, and the roar of laughter with which my fellow-students greeted my not unreasonable remark, that it looked very like a centipede."

"And do you recollect, too, the argument which I had once with your steward about the pickled fish which I brought you from Egypt; and the way in which, when the jar was opened, the servants shrieked and ran right and left, declaring that the fish-bones were the spines of poisonous serpents?"

"The old fellow is as obstinate as ever, I assure you, in his disbelief in salt water. He torments me continually by asking me to tell him the story of my

shipwreck, and does not believe me after all, though he has heard it a dozen times. 'Sir,' he said to me, solemnly, after you were gone, 'will that strange gentleman pretend to persuade me that anything eatable can come out of his great pond there at Alexandria, when every one can see that the best fountain in the country never breeds anything but frogs and leeches?'"

As he spoke they left the last field behind them, and entered upon a vast sheet of breezy down, speckled with shrubs and copse, and split here and there by rocky glens, ending in fertile valleys, once thick with farms and homesteads.

"Here," cried Synesius, "are our hunting-grounds. And now for one hour's forgetfulness, and the joys of the noble art! What could old Homer have been thinking of when he forgot to number it among the pursuits which are glorious to heroes, and make man illustrious, and yet could laud in those very words the forum?"

"The forum?" said Raphael. "I never saw it yet make men anything but rascals."

"Brazen-faced rascals, my friend. I detest the whole breed of lawyers, and never meet one without turning him into ridicule; effeminate pettifoggers, who shudder at the very sight of roast venison, when they think of the dangers by which it has been procured. But it is a cowardly age, my friend — a cowardly age. Let us forget it, and ourselves."

"And even philosophy and Hypatia?" said Raphael, archly.

"I have done with philosophy. To fight like an Heracleid, and to die like a bishop, is all I have left

— except Hypatia, the perfect, the wise! I tell you, friend, it is a comfort to me, even in my deepest misery, to recollect that the corrupt world yet holds one being so divine —"

And he was running on in one of his high-flown laudations of his idol, when Raphael checked him.

"I fear our common sympathy on that subject is rather weakened. I have begun to doubt her lately nearly as much as I doubt philosophy."

"Not her virtue?"

"No, friend; nor her beauty, nor her wisdom; simply her power of making me a better man. A selfish criterion, you will say. Be it so. . . . What a noble horse that is of yours!"

"He has been — he has been; but worn out now, like his master and his master's fortunes." . . .

"Not so, certainly, the colt on which you have done me the honour to mount me."

"Ah, my poor boy's pet! . . . You are the first person who has crossed him since —"

"Is he of your own breeding?" asked Raphael, trying to turn the conversation.

"A cross between that white Nisæan which you sent me, and one of my own mares."

"Not a bad cross; though he keeps a little of the bull head and greyhound flank of your Africans."

"So much the better, friend. Give me bone — bone and endurance for this rough down country. Your delicate Nisæans are all very well for a few minutes over those flat sands of Egypt: but here you need a horse who will go forty miles a-day over rough and smooth, and dine thankfully of thistles at night. Aha, poor little man!" — as a jerboa sprang up from

a tuft of bushes at his feet — "I fear you must help to fill our soup-kettle in these hard times!"

And with a dexterous sweep of his long whip, the worthy bishop entangled the jerboa's long legs, whisked him up to his saddle-bow, and delivered him to the groom and the game-bag.

"Kill him at once. Don't let him squeak, boy! — he cries too like a child." . . .

"Poor little wretch!" said Raphael. "What more right, now, have we to eat him than he to eat us?"

"Eh? If he can eat us, let him try. How long have you joined the Manichees?"

"Have no fears on that score. But, as I told you, since my wonderful conversion by Bran, the dog, I have begun to hold dumb animals in respect, as probably quite as good as myself."

"Then you need a further conversion, friend Raphael, and to learn what is the dignity of man; and when that arrives, you will learn to believe, with me, that the life of every beast upon the face of the earth would be a cheap price to pay in exchange for the life of the meanest human being."

"Yes, if they be required for food: but really, to kill them for our amusement!"

"Friend, when I was still a heathen, I recollect well how I used to haggle at that story of the cursing of the fig-tree; but when I learnt to know what man was, and that I had been all my life mistaking for a part of nature that race which was originally, and can be again, made in the likeness of God, then I began to see that it were well if every fig-tree upon earth were cursed if the spirit of one man could be taught thereby a single lesson. And so I speak of these,

my darling field-sports, on which I have not been ashamed, as you know, to write a book."

"And a very charming one: yet you were still a pagan, recollect, when you wrote it."

"I was; and then I followed the chase by mere nature and inclination. But now I know I have a right to follow it, because it gives me endurance, promptness, courage, self-control, as well as health and cheerfulness; and therefore — Ah! a fresh ostrich-track!"

And stopping short, Synesius began pricking slowly up the hill-side.

"Back!" whispered he, at last. "Quietly and silently. Lie down on your horses neck, as I do, or the long-necked rogues may see you. They must be close to us over the brow. I know that favourite grassy slope of old. Round under yon hill, or they will get wind of us, and then farewell to them!"

And Synesius and his groom cantered on, hanging each to their horses' necks by an arm and a leg, in a way which Raphael endeavoured in vain to imitate.

Two or three minutes more of breathless silence brought them to the edge of the hill, where Synesius halted, peered down a moment, and then turned to Raphael, his face and limbs quivering with delight, as he held up two fingers, to denote the number of the birds.

"Out of arrow range! Slip the dogs, Syphax!"

And in another minute Raphael found himself galloping headlong down the hill, while two magnificent ostriches, their outspread plumes waving in the bright breeze, their necks stooped almost to the ground,

and their long legs flashing out behind them, were sweeping away before the greyhounds at a pace which no mortal horse could have held for ten minutes.

"Baby that I am still!" cried Synesius, tears of excitement glittering in his eyes; . . . . . while Raphael gave himself up to the joy, and forgot even Victoria, in the breathless rush over rock and bush, sandhill and watercourse.

"Take care of that dry torrent-bed! Hold up, old horse! This will not last two minutes more. They cannot hold their pace against this breeze. . . . Well tried, good dog, though you did miss him! Ah, that my boy were here! There — they double. Spread right and left, my children, and ride at them as they pass!"

And the ostriches, unable, as Synesius said, to keep their pace against the breeze, turned sharp on their pursuers, and beating the air with outspread wings, came down the wind again, at a rate even more wonderful than before.

"Ride at him, Raphael — ride at him, and turn him into those bushes!" cried Synesius, fitting an arrow to his bow.

Raphael obeyed, and the bird swerved into the low scrub; the well-trained horse leapt at him like a cat; and Raphael, who dare not trust his skill in archery, struck with his whip at the long neck as it struggled past him, and felled the noble quarry to the ground. He was in the act of springing down to secure his prize, when a shout from Synesius stopped him.

"Are you mad? He will kick out your heart! Let the dogs hold him!"

"Where is the other?" asked Raphael, panting.

"Where he ought to be. I have not miss running shot for many a month."

"Really, you rival the Emperor Commodus self."

"Ah? I tried his fancy of crescent-headed a once, and decapitated an ostrich or two tolerably they are only fit for the amphitheatre: they will n safely in the quiver on horseback, I find. But wh that?" And he pointed to a cloud of white dust, a mile down the valley. "A herd of antelopes? God is indeed gracious to us! Come down — soever they are, we have no time to lose."

And collecting his scattered forces, Synesius pu on rapidly towards the object which had attracte attention.

"Antelopes!" cried one.

"Wild horses!" cried another.

"Tame ones, rather!" cried Synesius, with a ge of wrath. "I saw the flash of arms!"

"The Ausurians!" And a yell of rage rang the whole troop.

"Will you follow me, children?"

"To death!" shouted they.

"I know it. Oh that I had seven hundred of as Abraham had! We would see then whether scoundrels did not share, within a week, the fa Chedorlaomer's."

"Happy man, who can actually trust your slaves!" said Raphael, as the party galloped tightening their girdles and getting ready weapons.

"Slaves? If the law gives me the power of s one or two of them who are not yet wise enou

be trusted to take care of themselves, it is a fact which both I and they have long forgotten. Their fathers grew grey at my father's table, and God grant that they may grow grey at mine! We eat together, work together, hunt together, fight together, jest together, and weep together. God help us all! for we have but one common weal. Now — do you make out the enemy, boys?"

"Ausurians, your Holiness. The same party who tried Myrsinitis last week. I know them by the helmets which they took from the Markmen."

"And with whom are they fighting?"

No one could see. Fighting they certainly were: but their victims were beyond them, and the party galloped on.

"That was a smart business at Myrsinitis. The Ausurians appeared while the people were at morning prayers. The soldiers, of course, ran for their lives, and hid in the caverns, leaving the matter to the priests."

"If they were of your presbytery, I doubt not they proved themselves worthy of their diocesan."

"Ah, if all my priests were but like them! or my people either!" said Synesius, chatting quietly in full gallop, like a true son of the saddle. "They offered up prayers for victory, sallied out at the head of the peasants, and met the Moors in a narrow pass. There their hearts failed them a little. Faustus, the deacon, makes them a speech; charges the leader of the robbers, like young David, with a stone, beats his brains out therewith, strips him in true Homeric fashion, and routs the Ausurians with their leader's sword; returns and

erects a trophy in due classic form, and saves the whole valley."

"You should make him archdeacon."

"I would send him and his townfolk round the province, if I could, crowned with laurel, and proclaim before them at every market-place, 'These are men of God.' With whom can those Ausurians be dealing? Peasants would have been all killed long ago, and soldiers would have run away long ago. It is truly a portent in this country to see a fight last ten minutes. Who can they be? I see them now, and hewing away like men too. They are all on foot but two; and we have not a cohort of infantry left for many a mile round."

"I know who they are!" cried Raphael, suddenly striking spurs into his horse. "I will swear to that armour among a thousand. And there is a litter in the midst of them. On! and fight, men, if you ever fought in your lives!"

"Softly!" cried Synesius. "Trust an old soldier, and perhaps — alas! that he should have to say it — the best left in this wretched country. Round by the hollow, and take the barbarians suddenly in flank. They will not see us then till we are within twenty paces of them. Aha! you have a thing or two to learn yet, Aben-Ezra."

And chuckling at the prospect of action, the gallant bishop wheeled his little troop, and in five minutes more dashed out of the copse with a shout and a flight of arrows, and rushed into the thickest of the fight.

One cavalry skirmish must be very like another. A crash of horses, a flashing of sword-blades, five

minutes of blind confusion, and then those who have not been knocked out of their saddles by their neighbours' knees, and have not cut off their own horses' heads instead of their enemy's, find themselves, they know not how, either running away or being run away from — not one blow in ten having taken effect on either side. And even so Raphael, having made vain attempts to cut down several Moors, found himself standing on his head in an altogether undignified posture, among innumerable horses' legs, in all possible frantic motions. To avoid one, was to get in the way of another; so he philosophically sat still, speculating on the sensation of having his brains kicked out, till the cloud of legs vanished, and he found himself kneeling abjectly opposite the nose of a mule, on whose back sat, utterly unmoved, a tall and reverend man, in episcopal costume. The stranger, instead of bursting out laughing, as Raphael did, solemnly lifted his hand, and gave him his blessing. The Jew sprang to his feet, heedless of all such courtesies, and, looking round, saw the Ausurians galloping off up the hill in scattered groups, and Synesius standing close by him, wiping a bloody sword.

"Is the litter safe?" were his first words.

"Safe; and so are all. I gave you up for killed, when I saw you run through with that lance."

"Run through? I am as sound in the hide as a crocodile," said Raphael, laughing.

"Probably the fellow took the butt instead of the point, in his hurry. So goes a cavalry scuffle. I saw you hit three or four fellows running with the flat of your sword."

"Ah, that explains," said Raphael. — "Why, I

[illegible] since the last [illegible] on the Armenian frontier."

"I suppose that you were thinking of some one besides the Moor," said Synesius, archly, pointing to the lion: and Raphael, for the first time for many a year, blushed like a boy of fifteen, and then turned haughtily away, and remounted his horse, saying, "Gramercy for that I was!"

"Thank God rather that you have been kept from the shedding of blood," said the stranger bishop, in a soft, deliberate voice, with a peculiarly clear and delicate enunciation. "If God have given us the victory, why grudge His having spared any other of His creatures besides ourselves?"

"Because there are so many the more of them left to ravish, burn, and slay," answered Synesius. "Nevertheless, I am not going to argue with Augustine."

Augustine! Raphael looked intently at the man, a tall delicate-featured personage, with a lofty and narrow forehead, scarred like his cheeks with the deep furrows of many a doubt and woe. Resolve, gentle but unbending, was expressed in his thin close-set lips and his clear, quiet eye: but the calm of his mighty countenance was the calm of a worn-out volcano, over which centuries must pass before the earthquake-rents be filled with kindly soil, and the cinderslopes grow gay with grass and flowers. The Jew's thoughts, however, were soon turned into another channel by the hearty embraces of Majoricus and his son.

"We have caught you again, you truant!" said the young tribune; "you could not escape us, you see, after all."

"Rather," said the father, "we owe him a second debt of gratitude for a second deliverance. We were right hard bested when you rode up."

"Oh, he brings nothing but good with him whenever he appears; and then he pretends to be a bird of ill omen," said the light-hearted tribune, putting his armour to rights.

Raphael was in his secret heart not sorry to find that his old friends bore him no grudge for his caprice: but all he answered was —

"Pray thank any one but me; I have, as usual, proved myself a fool. But what brings you here, like Gods e Machinâ? It is contrary to all probabilities. One would not admit so astounding an incident, even in the modern drama."

"Contrary to none whatsoever, my friend. We found Augustine at Berenice, in act to set off to Synesius; we — one of us, that is — were certain that you would be found with him; and we decided on acting as Augustine's guard, for none of the dastard garrison dare stir out."

"One of us," thought Raphael, — "which one?" And, conquering his pride, he asked, as carelessly as he could, for Victoria.

"She is there, in the litter, poor child," said her father, in a serious tone.

"Surely not ill?"

"Alas! either the over-wrought excitement of months of heroism broke down when she found us safe at last, or some stroke from God — .... Who can tell what I may not have deserved? — But she has been utterly prostrate in body and mind, ever since we parted from you at Berenice.

The blunt soldier little guessed the meaning of his own words. But Raphael, as he heard, felt a pang shoot through his heart, too keen for him do discern whether it sprung from joy or from despair.

"Come," cried the cheerful voice of Synesius, "come Aben Ezra; you have knelt for Augustine's blessing already, and now you must enter into the fruition of it. Come, you two philosophers must know each other. Most holy, I entreat you to preach to this friend of mine, at once the wisest and the foolishest of men."

"Only the latter," said Raphael; "but open to any speech of Augustine's, at least when we are safe home, and game enough for Synesius's new guests killed."

And turning away, he rode silent and sullen by the side of his companions, who began at once to consult together as to the plans of Majoricus and his soldiers.

In spite of himself, Raphael soon became interested in Augustine's conversation. He entered into the subject of Cyrenian misrule and ruin as heartily and shrewdly as any man of the world; and when all the rest were at a loss, the prompt practical hint which cleared up the difficulty was certain to come from him. It was by his advice that Majoricus had brought his soldiery hither; it was his proposal that they should be employed for a fixed period in defending these remote southern boundaries of the province; he checked the impetuosity of Synesius, cheered the despair of Majoricus, appealed to the honour and the Christianity of the soldiers and seemed to have a word — and that the right word — for every man; and after a

while, Aben-Ezra quite forgot the stiffness and deliberation of his manner, and the quaint use of scripture texts in far-fetched illustrations of every opinion which he propounded. It had seemed at first a mere affectation; but the arguments which it was employed to enforce were in themselves so moderate and so rational, that Raphael began to feel, little by little, that his apparent pedantry was only the result of a wish to refer every matter, even the most vulgar, to some deep and divine rule of right and wrong.

"But you forget all this while, my friends," said Majoricus at last, "the danger which you incur by sheltering proclaimed rebels."

"The King of kings has forgiven your rebellion, in that while he has punished you by the loss of your lands and honours, he has given you your life for a prey in this city of refuge. It remains for you to bring forth worthy fruits of penitence; of which I know none better than those which John the Baptist commanded to the soldiery of old, 'Do no violence to any man, and be content with your wages.'"

"As for rebels and rebellion," said Synesius, "they are matters unknown among us; for where there is no king there can be no rebellion. Whosoever will help us against Ausurians is loyal in our eyes. And as for our political creed, it is simple enough — namely, that the emperor never dies, and that his name is Agamemnon, who fought at Troy; which any of my grooms will prove to you syllogistically enough to satisfy Augustine himself. As thus —

"Agamemnon was the greatest and the best of kings.

"The emperor is the greatest and best of kings.

"Therefore, Agamemnon is the emperor, and conversely."

"It had been well," said Augustine, with a grave smile, "if some of our friends had held the same doctrine, even at the expense of their logic."

"Or if," answered Synesius, "they believed with us, that the emperor's chamberlain is a clever old man, with a bald head like my own, Ulysses by name, who was rewarded with the prefecture of all lands north of the Mediterranean, for putting out the Cyclop's eye two years ago. However, enough of this. But, you see, you are not in any extreme danger of informers and intriguers .... The real difficulty is, how you will be able to obey Augustine, by being content with your wages. For," lowering his voice, "you will get literally none."

"It will be as much as we deserve," said the young Tribune; "but my fellows have a trick of eating —"

"They are welcome, then, to all deer and ostriches which they can catch. But I am not only penniless, but reduced myself to live like the Læstrygons, on meat and nothing else; all crops and stocks for miles round being either burnt or carried off."

"E nihilo nihil!" said Augustine, having nothing else to say. But here Raphael woke up on a sudden with —

"Did the Pentapolitan wheat-ships go to Rome?"

"No; Orestes stopped them when he stopped the Alexandrian convoy."

"Then the Jews have the wheat, trust them for it; and what they have, I have. There are certain monies of mine lying at interest in the seaports, which will set

that matter to rights for a month or two. Do you find an escort to-morrow, and I will find wheat."

"But, most generous of friends, I can neither repay you interest nor principle."

"Be it so. I have spent so much money during the last thirty years in doing nothing but evil, that it is hard if I may not at last spend a little in doing good. — Unless his Holiness of Hippo thinks it wrong for you to accept the good will of an infidel?"

"Which of these three," said Augustine, "was neighbour to him who fell among thieves, but he who had mercy on him? Verily, my friend Raphael Aben-Ezra, thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

"Of which God?" asked Raphael, slily.

"Of the God of thy forefather Abraham, whom thou shalt hear us worship this evening, if He will. Synesius, have you a church wherein I can perform the evening service, and give a word of exhortation to these my children?"

Synesius sighed. "There is a ruin, which was last month a church."

"And is one still. Man did not place there the presence of God, and man cannot expel it."

And so, sending out hunting-parties right and left in chase of everything which had animal life, and picking up before nightfall a tolerably abundant supply of game, they went homewards, where Victoria was intrusted to the care of Synesius's old stewardess, and the soldiery were marched straight into the church; while Synesius's servants, to whom the Latin service would have been unintelligible, busied themselves in cooking the still warm game.

Strangely enough it sounded to Raphael that even-

ing, to hear, among those smoke-grimed pillars and fallen rafters, the grand old Hebrew psalms of his nation ring aloft, to the very chants, too, which were said by the Rabbi to have been used in the Temple-worship of Jerusalem. . . . . They, and the invocations, thanksgivings, blessings, the very outward ceremonial itself, were all Hebraic, redolent of the thoughts, the words of his own ancestors. That lesson from the book of Proverbs, which Augustine's deacon was reading in Latin — the blood of the man who wrote those words was flowing in Aben-Ezra's vein's. . . . . Was it a mistake, an hypocrisy? or were they indeed worshipping, as they fancied, the Ancient One who spoke face to face with his forefathers, the Archetype of man, the Friend of Abraham and of Israel?

And now the sermon began; and as Augustine stood for a moment in prayer in front of the ruined altar, every furrow in his worn face lit up by a ray of moonlight which streamed in through the broken roof, Raphael waited impatiently for his speech. What would he, the refined dialectician, the ancient teacher of heathen rhetoric, the courtly and learned student, the ascetic celibate and theosopher, have to say to those coarse war-worn soldiers, Thracians and Markmen, Gauls and Belgians, who sat watching there, with those sad earnest faces? What one thought or feeling in common could there be between Augustine and his congregation?

At last, after signing himself with the cross, he began. The subject was one of the psalms which had just been read — a battle psalm, concerning Moab and Amalek, and the old border wars of Palestine. What would he make of that?

He seemed to start lamely enough, in spite of the exquisite grace of his voice, and manner, and language, and the epigrammatic terseness of every sentence. He spent some minutes over the inscription of the psalm — allegorized it — made it mean something which it never did mean in the writer's mind, and which it, as Raphael well knew, never could mean, for his interpretation was founded on a sheer mistranslation. He punned on the Latin version — derived the meaning of Hebrew words from Latin etymologies. . . . . And as he went on with the psalm itself, the common sense of David seemed to evaporate in mysticism. The most fantastic and far-fetched illustrations, drawn from the commonest objects, alternated with mysterious theosophic dogma. Where was that learning for which he was so famed? Where was that reverence for the old Hebrew Scriptures which he professed? He was treating David as ill as Hypatia used to treat Homer — worse even than old Philo did, when in the home life of the old patriarchs, and in the mighty acts of Moses and Joshua, he could find nothing but spiritual allegories wherewith to pamper the private experiences of the secluded theosophist. And Raphael felt very much inclined to get up and go away, and still more inclined to say, with a smile, in his haste, "All men are liars." . . . .

And yet, what an illustration that last one was! No mere fancy, but a real deep glance into the working of the material universe, as symbolic of the spiritual and unseen one. And not drawn, as Hypatia's were, exclusively from some sublime or portentous phenomenon, but from some dog, or kettle, or fishwife, with a homely insight worthy of old Socrates himself. How personal he was becoming, too! . . . .

By long trains of declamation, but dramatic dialogue and interrogation, by hints and inferences, and he at once felt the open, common-place sinner's failing. . . . And yet each petty stroke was put in a universal, comprehensive form, which made Raphael himself wince . . which might, he thought, have made any man or woman either, wince in like manner. Well, whether or not Augustine knew truths for all men, he at least knew sins for all men, and for himself as well as his hearers. There was no denying that. He was a real man, right or wrong. What he rebuked in others, he had felt in himself, and fought it to the death-grip, as the flush and quiver of that worn face proclaimed. . . . But yet, why were the Edomites, by an utterly mistaken pun on their name, to signify one sort of sin, and the Ammonites another, and the Amalekites another? What had that to do with the old psalm? What had it to do with the present auditory? Was not this the wildest and lowest form of that unreal, subtilising, mystic pedantry, of which he had sickened long ago in Hypatia's lecture-room, till he fled to Bran, the dog, for honest practical realities?

No. . . . . Gradually, as Augustine's hints became more practical and pointed, Raphael saw that there was in his mind a most real and organic connexion, true or false, in what seemed at first mere arbitrary allegory. Amalekites, personal sins, Ausurian robbers, and ravishers, were to him only so many different forms of one and the same evil. He who helped any of them fought against the righteous God; he who fought against them fought for that God; but he must conquer the Amalekites within, if he expected to conquer the Amalekites without. Could the legionaries permanently put

lown the lust and greed around them, while their own nearts were enslaved to lust and greed within? Would hey not be helping it by example, while they pretended o crush it by sword-strokes? Was it not a mockery, an hypocrisy? Could God's blessing be on it? Could hey restore unity and peace to the country while there was neither unity nor peace within them? What had produced the helplessness of the people, the imbecility of the military, but inward helplessness, inward weakness? They were weak against Moors, because they were weak against enemies more deadly than Moors. How could they fight for God outwardly, while they were fighting against Him inwardly? He would not go forth with their hosts. How could He, when He was not among their hosts? He, a spirit, must dwell in their spirits. . . . . And then the shout of a King would be among them, and one of them should chase a thousand. . . . . Or if not — if both people and soldiers required still further chastening and humbling — what matter, provided that they were chastened and humbled? What matter if their faces were confounded, if they were thereby driven to seek His Name, who alone was the Truth, the Light, and the Life? What if they were slain? Let them have conquered the inward enemies, what matter to them if the outward enemies seemed to prevail for a moment? They should be recompensed at the resurrection of the just, when death was swallowed up in victory. It would be seen then who had really conquered in the eyes of the just God — they, God's ministers, the defenders of peace and justice, or the Ausurians, the enemies thereof. . . . . And then, by some quaintest turn of fancy, he introduced a word of pity and hope, even for the wild Moorish robbers. It

might be good for them to have succeeded thus far; they might learn from their Christian captives, purified by affliction, truths which those captives had forgotten in prosperity. And, again, it might be good for them, as well as for Christians, to be confounded and made like chaff before the wind, that so they too might learn His Name. . . . . And so on, through and in spite of all conceits, allegories, overstrained interpretations, Augustine went on evolving from the Psalms, and from the past, and from the future, the assertion of a Living, Present God, the eternal enemy of discord, injustice, and evil, the eternal helper and deliverer of those who were enslaved and crushed thereby in soul or body. . . . It was all most strange to Raphael. . . . Strange in its utter unlikeness to any teaching, Platonist or Hebrew, which he had ever heard before, and stranger still in its agreement with those teachings; in the instinctive ease with which it seemed to unite and justify them all by the talisman of some one idea — and what that might be, his Jewish prejudices could not prevent his seeing, and yet would not allow him to acknowledge. But, howsoever he might redden with Hebrew pride; howsoever he might long to persuade himself that Augustine was building up a sound and right practical structure on the foundation of a sheer lie; he could not help watching, at first with envy, and then with honest pleasure, the faces of the rough soldiers, as they gradually lightened up into fixed attention, into cheerful and solemn resolve.

"What wonder?" said Raphael to himself, "what wonder, after all? He has been speaking to these wild beasts as to sages and saints; he has been telling them that God is as much with them as with prophets

and psalmists. . . . I wonder if Hypatia, with all her beauty, could have touched their hearts as he has done?"

And when Raphael rose at the end of this strange discourse, he felt more like an old Hebrew than he had done since he sat upon his nurse's knee, and heard legends about Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. What if Augustine were right after all? What if the Jehovah of the old Scriptures were not merely the national patron of the children of Abraham, as the Rabbis held; not merely, as Philo held, the Divine Wisdom which inspired a few elect sages, even among the heathen; but the Lord of the whole earth, and of the nations thereof? — And suddenly, for the first time in his life, passages from the psalms and prophets flashed across him, which seemed to assert this. What else did that whole book of Daniel, and the history of Nebuchadnezzar mean — if not that? Philosophic latitudinarianism had long ago cured him of the Rabbinical notion of the Babylonian conqueror as an incarnate fiend, devoted to Tophet, like Sennacherib before him. He had long in private admired the man, as a magnificent human character, a fairer one, in his eyes, than either Alexander or Julius Caesar. . . . What if Augustine had given him a hint which might justify his admiration? . . . But more . . . What if Augustine were right in going even further than Philo and Hypatia? What if this same Jehovah, Wisdom, Logos, call him what they might, were actually the God of the spirits, as well as of the bodies of all flesh? What if he was as near — Augustine said that he was — to the hearts of those wild Markmen, Gauls, Thracians, as to Augustine's own heart? What if he

were — Augustine said he was — yearning after, enlightening, leading home to himself, the souls of the poorest, the most brutal, the most sinful? — What if he loved man as man, and not merely one favoured race or one favoured class of minds? . . . And in the light of that hypothesis, that strange story of the Cross of Calvary seemed not so impossible after all . . . But then, celibacy and asceticism, utterly non-human as they were, what had they to do with the theory of a human God?

And filled with many questionings, Raphael was not sorry to have the matter brought to an issue that very evening, in Synesius's sitting-room. Majoricus, in his blunt, soldierlike way, set Raphael and Augustine at each other without circumlocution; and Raphael, after trying to smile and pooh-pooh away the subject, was tempted to make a jest on a seeming fallacious conceit of Augustine's, — found it more difficult than he thought to trip up the serious and wary logician, lost his temper a little — a sign, perhaps, of returning health in a sceptic — and soon found himself fighting desperately, with Synesius backing him, apparently for the mere pleasure of seeing a battle, and Majoricus making him more and more cross by the implicit dogmatic faith with which he hewed at one Gordian knot after another, till Augustine had to save himself from his friends by tripping the good prefect gently up, and leaving him miles behind the disputants, who argued on and on, till broad daylight shone in, and the sight of the desolation below recalled all parties to more material weapons, and a sterner warfare.

But little thought Raphael Aben-Ezra, as he sat there, calling up every resource of his wit and learn-

ing, in the hope, half malicious, half honestly cautious, of upsetting the sage of Hippo, and forgetting all heaven and earth in the delight of battle with his peers, that in a neighbouring chamber, her tender limbs outspread upon the floor, her face buried in her dishevelled locks, lay Victoria, wrestling all night long for him in prayer and bitter tears, as the murmur of busy voices reached her eager ears, longing in vain to catch the sense of words, on which hung now her hopes and bliss — how utterly and entirely, she had never yet confessed to herself, though she dare confess it to That Son of Man to Whom she prayed, as to One who felt with tenderness and insight beyond that of a brother, a father, even of a mother, for her maiden's blushes and her maiden's woes.

CHAPTER VII.

Pandemonium.

But where was Philammon all that week?

For the first day or two of his imprisonment he had raved like some wild beast entrapped. His newly-found purpose and energy, thus suddenly dammed back and checked, boiled up in frantic rage. He tore at the bars of his prison; he rolled himself, shrieking, on the floor. He called in vain on Hypatia, on Pelagia, on Arsenius — on all but God. Pray he could not, and dare not; for to whom was he to pray? To the stars? — to the Abysses and the Eternities? . . . .

Alas! as Augustine said once, bitterly enough, of his own Manichæan teachers, Hypatia had taken away the living God, and given him instead the four Elements. . . . . And in utter bewilderment and hopeless terror he implored the pity of every guard and gaoler who passed along the corridor, and conjured them, as brothers, fathers, men, to help him. Moved at once by his agony and by his exceeding beauty, the rough Thracians, who knew enough of their employer's character to have little difficulty in belieing his victim to be innocent, listened to him and questioned him. But when they offered the very help which he implored, and asked him to tell his story, the

poor boy's tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. How could he publish his sister's shame? And yet she was about to publish it herself! . . . . And instead of words, he met their condolences with fresh agonies, till they gave him up as mad; and, tired by his violence, compelled him, with blows and curses, to remain quiet: and so the week wore out, in dull and stupified despair, which trembled on the very edge of idiocy. Night and day were alike to him. The food which was thrust in through his grate remained untasted; hour after hour, day after day, he sat upon the ground, his head buried in his hands, half-dozing from mere exhaustion of body and mind. Why should he care to stir, to eat, to live? He had but one purpose in heaven and earth: and that one purpose was impossible.

At last his cell-door grated on its hinges. "Up, my mad youth!" cried a rough voice. "Up, and thank the favour of the gods, and the bounty of our noble — ahem! — prefect. To-day he gives freedom to all prisoners. And I suppose a pretty boy like you may go about your business, as well as uglier rascals!"

Philammon looked up in the gaoler's face with a dim, half-comprehension of his meaning.

"Do you hear?" cried the man, with a curse. "You are free. Jump up, or I shut the door again, and your one chance is over."

"Did she dance Venus Anadyomene?"

"She! Who?"

"My sister! Pelagia!"

"Heaven only knows what she has not danced in her time! But they say she dances to-day once more. Quick! out, or I shall not be ready in time for

the sports. They begin an hour hence. Free admission into the theatre to-day for all — rogues and honest men, Christians and heathens. — Curse the boy! he's as mad as ever."

So indeed Philammon seemed; for springing suddenly to his feet, he rushed out past the gaoler, upsetting him into the corridor, and fled wildly from the prison among the crowd of liberated ruffians, ran from the prison home, from home to the baths, from the baths to the theatre, and was soon pushing his way, regardless of etiquette, toward the lower tiers of benches, in order, he hardly knew why, to place himself as near as possible to the very sight which he dreaded and abhorred.

As fate would have it, the passage by which he had entered opened close to the prefect's chair of state, where sat Orestes, gorgeous in his robes of office, and by him — to Philammon's surprise and horror — Hypatia herself.

More beautiful than ever, her forehead sparkling, like Juno's own, with a lofty tiara of jewels, her white Ionic robe half hidden by a crimson shawl, there sat the vestal, the philosopher. What did she there? But the boy's eager eyes, accustomed but too well to note every light and shade of feeling which crossed that face, saw in a moment how wan and haggard was its expression. She wore a look of constraint, of half-terrified self-resolve, as of a martyr: and yet not an undoubting martyr; for as Orestes turned his head at the stir of Philammon's intrusion, and flashing with anger at the sight, motioned him fiercely back, Hypatia turned too, and as her eyes met her pupil's, she blushed crimson, and started, and seemed in act to

motion him back also; and then, recollecting herself, whispered something to Orestes which quieted his wrath, and composed herself, or rather sunk into her place again, as one who was determined to abide the worst.

A knot of gay young gentlemen, Philammon's fellow-students, pulled him down among them, with welcome and laughter; and before he could collect his thoughts, the curtain in front of the stage had fallen, and the sport began.

The scene represented a background of desert mountains, and on the stage itself, before a group of temporary huts, stood huddling together the black Libyan prisoners, some fifty men, women, and children, bedizened with gaudy feathers and girdles of tasselled leather, brandishing their spears and targets, and glaring out with white eyes on the strange scene before them, in childish awe and wonder.

Along the front of the stage a wattled battlement had been erected, while below, the hyposcenium had been painted to represent rocks, thus completing the rough imitation of a village among the Libyan hills.

Amid breathless silence, a herald advanced, and proclaimed that these were prisoners taken in arms against the Roman senate and people, and therefore worthy of immediate death: but that the prefect, in his exceeding clemency toward them, and especial anxiety to afford the greatest possible amusement to the obedient and loyal citizens of Alexandria, had determined, instead of giving them at once to the beasts, to allow them to fight for their lives, promising to the survivors a free pardon if they acquitted themselves valiantly.

The poor wretches on the stage, when this proclamation was translated to them, set up a barbaric yell of joy, and brandished their spears and targets more fiercely than ever.

But their joy was short. The trumpets sounded the attack; a body of gladiators, equal in number to the savages, marched out from one of the two great side-passages, made their obeisance to the applauding spectators, and planting their scaling-ladders against the front of the stage, mounted to the attack.

The Libyans fought like tigers; yet from the first Hypatia, and Philammon also, could see that their promised chance of life was a mere mockery. Their light darts and naked limbs were no match for the heavy swords and complete armour of their brutal assailants, who endured carelessly a storm of blows and thrusts on heads and faces protected by visored helmets: yet so fierce was the valour of the Libyans, that even they recoiled twice, and twice the scaling-ladders were hurled down again, while more than one gladiator lay below, rolling in the death-agony.

And then burst forth the sleeping devil in the hearts of that great brutalized multitude. Yell upon yell of savage triumph, and still more savage disappointment, rang from every tier of that vast ring of seats, at each blow and parry, onslaught and repulse; and Philammon saw with horror and surprise that luxury, refinement, philosophic culture itself, were no safeguards against the infection of bloodthirstiness. Gay and delicate ladies, whom he had seen three days before simpering delight at Hypatia's heavenward aspirations, and some, too, whom he seemed to recol-

lect in Christian churches, sprang from their seats, waved their hands and handkerchiefs, and clapped and shouted to the gladiators. For, alas! there was no doubt as to which side the favour of the spectators inclined. With taunts, jeers, applause, entreaties, the hired ruffians were urged on to their work of blood. The poor wretches heard no voice raised in their favour; nothing but contempt, hatred, eager lust of blood, glared from those thousands of pitiless eyes; and, brokenhearted, despairing, they flagged and drew back one by one. A shout of triumph greeted the gladiators as they climbed over the battlement, and gained a footing on the stage. The wretched blacks broke up, and fled wildly from corner to corner, looking vainly for an outlet. . . . .

And then began a butchery. . . . Some fifty men, women, and children were cooped together in that narrow space. . . . . And yet Hypatia's countenance dit not falter. Why should it? What were their numbers, beside the thousands who had perished year by year for centuries, by that and far worse deaths, in the amphitheatres of that empire, for that faith which she was vowed to re-establish. It was part of the great system; and she must endure it.

Not that she did not feel; for she, too, was woman; and her heart, raised far above the brutal excitement of the multitude, lay calmly open to the most poignant stings of pity. Again and again she was in the act to entreat mercy for some shrieking woman or struggling child; but before her lips could shape the words, the blow had fallen, or, the wretch was whirled away from her sight in the dense undistinguishable mass of slayers and slain. Yes, she had begun, and she must follow

to the end. . . . And, after all, what were the lives of those few semibrutes, returning thus a few years earlier to the clay from which they sprang, compared with the regeneration of a world? . . . . And it would be over in a few minutes more, and that black writhing heap be still for ever, and the curtain fall. . . . . And then for Venus Anadyomene, and art, and joy, and peace, and the graceful wisdom and beauty of the old Greek art, calming and civilizing all hearts, and softening them into pure devotion for the immortal myths, the immortal deities, who had inspired their forefathers in the glorious days of old. . . . . But still the black heap writhed; and she looked away, up, down, and round, everywhere, to avoid the sickening sight; and her eye caught Philammon's gazing at her with looks of horror, and disgust. . . . . A thrill of shame rushed through her heart, and blushing scarlet, she sank her head, and whispered to Orestes, —

"Have mercy! — spare the rest!"

"Nay, fairest vestal! The mob has tasted blood, and they must have their fill of it, or they will turn on us for aught I know. Nothing so dangerous as to check a brute, whether he be horse, dog, or man, when once his spirit is up. Ha! there is a fugitive! How well the little rascal runs!"

As he spoke, a boy, the only survivor, leaped from the stage, and rushed across the orchestra toward them, followed by a rough cur-dog.

"You shall have this youth, if he reaches us."

Hypatia watched breathless. The boy had just arrived at the altar in the centre of the orchestra, when he saw a gladiator close upon him. The ruffian's arm was raised to strike, when, to the astonishment of the

whole theatre, boy and dog turned valiantly to bay, and leaping on the gladiator, dragged him between them to the ground. The triumph was momentary. The uplifted hands, the shout of "Spare him!" came too late. The man, as he lay, buried his sword in the slender body of the child, and then rising, walked coolly back to the side passages, while the poor cur stood over the little corpse, licking its hands and face, and making the whole building ring with his doleful cries. The attendants entered, and striking their hooks into corpse after corpse, dragged them out of sight, marking their path by long red furrows in the sand; while the dog followed, until his inauspicious howlings died away down distant passages.

Philammon felt sick and giddy, and half rose to escape. But Pelagia! . . . No — he must sit it out, and see the worst, if worse than this was possible. He looked round. The people were coolly sipping wine and eating cakes, while they chatted admiringly about the beauty of the great curtain, which had fallen and hidden the stage, and represented, on a ground of deep-blue sea, Europa carried by the bull across the Bosphorus, while Nereids and Tritons played around.

A single flute within the curtain began to send forth luscious strains, deadened and distant, as if through far-off glens and woodlands; and from the side passages issued three Graces, led by Peitho, the goddess of persuasion, bearing a herald's staff in her hand. She advanced to the altar in the centre of the orchestra, and informed the spectators that, during the absence of Ares in aid of a certain great military expedition, which was shortly to decide the diadem of Rome, and the liberty, and prosperity, and supremacy

of Egypt and Alexandria, Aphrodite had returned to her lawful allegiance, and submitted for the time being to the commands of her husband, Hephæstus; that he, as the deity of artificers, felt a peculiar interest in the welfare of the city of Alexandria, the workshop of the world, and had, as a sign of his especial favour, prevailed upon his fair spouse to exhibit, for this once, her beauties to the assembled populace, and, in the unspoken poetry of motion, to represent to them the emotions with which, as she arose new-born from the sea, she first surveyed that fair expanse of heaven and earth of which she now reigned undisputed queen.

A shout of rapturous applause greeted this announcement, and forthwith limped from the opposite slip the lame deity himself, hammer and pincers on shoulder, followed by a train of gigantic Cyclops, who bore on their shoulders various pieces of gilded metal-work.

Hephæstus, who was intended to supply the comic element in the vast pantomimic pageant, shambled forward with studied uncouthness, amid roars of laughter; surveyed the altar with ludicrous contempt; raised his mighty hammer, shivered it to pieces with a single blow, and beckoned to his attendants to carry off the fragments, and replace it with something more fitting for his august spouse.

With wonderful quickness the metal open-work was put in its place, and fitted together, forming a frame of coral branches intermingled with dolphins, Nereids, and Tritons. Four gigantic Cyclops then approached, staggering under the weight of a circular slab of green marble, polished to a perfect mirror, which they placed on the framework. The Graces

wreathed its circumference with garlands of sea-weed, shells, and corallines, and the mimic sea was complete.

Peitho and the Graces retired a few steps, and grouped themselves with the Cyclops, whose grimed and brawny limbs, and hideous one-eyed masks, threw out in striking contrast the delicate hue and grace of the beautiful maiden figures; while Hephæstus turned toward the curtain, and seemed to await impatiently the forthcoming of the goddess.

Every lip was breathless with expectation as the flutes swelled louder and nearer; horns and cymbals took up the harmony; and, to a triumphant burst of music, the curtain rose, and a simultaneous shout of delight burst from ten thousand voices.

The scene behind represented a magnificent temple, half hidden in an artificial wood of tropic trees and shrubs, which filled the stage. Fauns and Dryads peeped laughing from among their stems, and gorgeous birds, tethered by unseen threads, fluttered and sang among their branches. In the centre, an overarching avenue of palms led from the temple doors to the front of the stage, from which the mimic battlements had disappeared, and had been replaced, in those few moments, by a broad slope of smooth greensward, leading down into the orchestra, and fringed with myrtles, roses, apple-trees, poppies, and crimson hyacinths, stained with the life-blood of Adonis.

The folding doors of the temple opened slowly; the crash of instruments resounded from within; and, preceded by the musicians, came forth the triumph of Aphrodite, and passed down the slope, and round the outer ring of the orchestra.

A splendid car, drawn by white oxen, bore the

rarest and gaudiest of foreign flowers and fruits, which young girls, dressed as Hours and Seasons, strewed in front of the procession and among the spectators.

A long line of beautiful youths and maidens, crowned with garlands, and robed in scarfs of purple gauze, followed by two and two. Each pair carried or led a pair of wild animals, captives of the conquering might of Beauty.

Foremost were borne, on the wrists of the actors, the birds especially sacred to the goddess — doves and sparrows, wrynecks and swallows; and a pair of gigantic Indian tortoises, each ridden by a lovely nymph, showed that Orestes had not forgotten one wish, at least, of his intended bride.

Then followed strange birds from India, parakeets, peacocks, pheasants, silver and golden; bustards and ostriches, the latter, bestridden each by a tiny cupid, were led on in golden leashes, followed by antelopes and oryxes, elks from beyond the Danube, four-horned rams from the Isles of the Hyperborean Ocean, and the strange hybrid of the Libyan hills, believed by all spectators to be half-bull, half-horse. And then a murmur of delighted awe ran through the theatre, as bears and leopards, lions and tigers, fettered in heavy chains of gold, and made gentle for the occasion by narcotics, paced sedately down the slope, obedient to their beautiful guides; while behind them, the unwieldy bulk of two double-horned rhinoceroses, from the far south, was over-topped by the long slender necks and large soft eyes of a pair of giraffes, such as had not been seen in Alexandria for more than fifty years.

A cry arose of "Orestes! Orestes! Health to the illustrious Prefect! Thanks for his bounty!" And

a hired voice or two among the crowd cried, "Hail o Orestes! Hail, Emperor of Africa!" . . . . But there was no response.

"The rose is still in the bud," simpered Orestes to Hypatia. He rose, beckoned and bowed the crowd into silence; and then, after a short pantomimic exhibition of rapturous gratitude and humility, pointed triumphantly to the palm avenue, among the shadows of which appeared the wonder of the day — the huge tusks and trunk of the white elephant himself.

There it was at last! Not a doubt of it! A real elephant, and yet as white as snow. Sight never seen before in Alexandria — never to be seen again! "Oh, thrice blest men of Macedonia!" shouted some worthy on high, "the gods are bountiful to you this day!" And all mouths and eyes confirmed the opinion, as they opened wider and yet wider to drink in the inexhaustible joy and glory.

On he paced solemnly, while the whole theatre resounded to his heavy tread, and the Fauns and Dryads fled in terror. A choir of nymphs swung round him hand in hand, and sang, as they danced along, the conquering might of beauty, the tamer of beasts, and men, and deities. Skirmishing parties of little winged cupids spread themselves over the orchestra, from left to right, and pelted the spectators with perfumed comfits, shot among them from their tiny bows arrows of fragrant sandal-wood, or swung smoking censers, which loaded the air with intoxicating odours.

The procession came on down the slope, and the elephant approached the spectators; his tusks were wreathed with roses and myrtles; his ears were pierced

with splendid ear-rings, a jewelled frontlet hung between his eyes; Eros himself, a lovely winged boy, sat on his neck, and guided him with the point of a golden arrow. But what precious thing was it which that shell-formed car upon his back contained? The goddess? Pelagia Aphrodite herself?

Yes; whiter than the snow-white elephant — more rosy than the pink-tipped shell in which she lay, among crimson cushions and silver gauze, there shone the goddess, thrilling all hearts with those delicious smiles, and glances of the bashful playful eyes, and grateful wavings of her tiny hand, as the whole theatre rose with one accord, and ten thousand eyes were concentrated on the unequalled loveliness beneath them.

Twice the procession passed round the whole circumference of the orchestra, and then returning from the foot of the slope toward the central group around Hephæstus, deployed right and left in front of the stage. The lions and tigers were led away into the side passages; the youths and maidens combined themselves with the gentler animals into groups lessening gradually from the centre to the wings, and stood expectant, while the elephant came forward, and knelt behind the platform destined for the goddess.

The valves of the shell closed. The Graces unloosed the fastenings of the car. The elephant turned his trunk over his back, and, guided by the soft hands of the girls, grasped the shell, and lifting it high in air, deposited it on the steps at the back of the platform.

Hephæstus limped forward, and with his most uncouth gestures, signified the delight which he had in bestowing such a sight upon his faithful artisans of

Alexandria, and the unspeakable enjoyment which they were to expect from the mystic dance of the goddess; and then retired, leaving the Graces to advance in front of the platform, and with their arms twined round each other, began Hypatia's song of invocation.

As the first strophe died away, the valves of the shell reopened, and discovered Aphrodite crouching on one knee within. She raised her head, and gazed around the vast circle of seats. A mild surprise was on her countenance, which quickened into delighted wonder, and bashfulness struggling with the sense of new enjoyment and new powers. She glanced downward at herself; and smiled, astonished at her own loveliness; then upward at the sky; and seemed ready, with an awful joy, to spring up into the boundless void. Her whole figure dilated; she seemed to drink in strength from every object which met her in the great universe around; and slowly, from among the shells and sea-weeds, she rose to her full height, the mystic cestus glittering round her waist, in deep festoons of emeralds and pearls, and stepped forward upon the marble sea-floor, wringing the dripping perfume from her locks, as Aphrodite rose of old.

For the first minute, the crowd was too breathless with pleasure to think of applause. But the goddess seemed to require due homage; and when she folded her arms across her bosom, and stood motionless for an instant, as if to demand the worship of the universe, every tongue was loosed, and a thunder-clap of "Aphrodite!" rung out across the roofs of Alexandria, and startled Cyril in his chamber at the Serapeium, and weary muleteers on distant sand-hills, and dozing mariners far out at sea.

And then began a miracle of art, such as v possible among a people of the free and exqui sical training, and the delicate æsthetic perce those old Greeks, even in their most fallen d dance, in which every motion was a word, an eloquent as motion; in which every attitude wa motive for a sculptor of the purest school, highest physical activity was manifested, not a coarser comic pantomimes, in fantastic bounds natural distortions, but in perpetual delicate tions of a stately and self-restraining grace. T was for the moment transformed into the godde theatre, and Alexandria, and the gorgeous beyond, had vanished from her imagination spectators, under the constraining inspiration art, and they and she alike saw nothing but th sea around Cythera, and the goddess hoverin its emerald mirror, raying forth on sea, and a shore, beauty, and joy, and love. . . .

Philammon's eyes were bursting from his he shame and horror: and yet he could not hate h even despise her. He would have done so, ha been the faintest trace of human feeling in he tenance, to prove that some germ of moral se gered within: but even the faint blush and th cast eye with which she had entered the theatr gone; and the only expression on her face was intense enjoyment of her own activity and sk satisfied vanity, as of a petted child. . . Was countable? A reasonable soul, capable of v wrong at all? He hoped not.... He would trus And still Pelagia danced on; and for a whole agony, he could see nothing in heaven or ea

the bewildering maze of those white feet, as they twinkled over their white image in the marble mirror.... At last it was over. Every limb suddenly collapsed, and she stood drooping in soft self-satisfied fatigue, awaiting the burst of applause which rang through Philammon's ears, proclaiming to heaven and earth, as with a mighty trumpet-blast, his sister's shame.

The elephant rose, and moved forward to the side of the slabs. His back was covered with crimson cushions, on which it seemed Aphrodite was to return without her shell. She folded her arms across her bosom, and stood smiling, as the elephant gently wreathed his trunk around her waist, and lifted her slowly from the slab, in act to place her on his back. . . . .

The little feet, clinging half fearfully together, had just risen from the marble — The elephant started, dropped his delicate burden heavily on the slab, looked down, raised his forefoot, and throwing his trunk into the air, gave a shrill scream of terror and disgust. . . . .

The foot was red with blood — the young boy's blood — which was soaking and bubbling up through the fresh sand where the elephant had trodden, in a round, dark, purple spot. . . . .

Philammon could bear no more. Another moment and he had hurled down through the dense mass of spectators, clearing rank after rank of seats by the sheer strength of madness, leaped the balustrade into the orchestra below, and rushed across the space to the foot of the platform.

"Pelagia! Sister! My sister! Have mercy on me! on yourself! I will hide you! save you! and we

will flee together out of this infernal place! this of devils! I am your brother! Come!"

She looked at him one moment with wide, eyes — The truth flashed on her —

"Brother!"

And she sprang from the platform into his a . . . A vision of a lofty window in Athens, looking over far olive-yards and gardens, and the bright r and basins of the Piræus, and the broad blue sea, w the purple peaks of Ægina beyond all. . . . . And dark-eyed boy, with his arm around her neck, point laughing to the twinkling masts in the far harbo and called her sister. . . . The dead soul woke with her; and with a wild cry she recoiled from him in a agony of shame, and covering her face with both he hands, sank down among the blood-stained sand.

A yell, as of all hell broke loose, rang along that vast circle —

"Down with him!" "Away with him!" "Crucify the slave!" "Give the barbarian to the beasts with him, noble Prefect!" A crowd of attendants rushed upon him, and many of the spectators sprang from their seats, and were on the point of leaping down into the orchestra.

Philammon turned upon them like a lion at bay; and clear and loud his voice rose through the roar of the multitude.

"Ay! murder me as the Romans murdered Saint Telemachus! Slaves as besotted and accursed as your besotted and accursed tyrants! Lower than the beasts whom you employ as your butchers! Murder and lust go fitly hand in hand, and the throne of my sister's shame is well built on the blood of innocents! Let

my death end the devil's sacrifice, and fill up the cup of your iniquity!"

"To the beasts!" "Make the elephant trample him to powder!"

And the huge brute, goaded on by the attendants, rushed on the youth, while Eros leaped from his neck, and fled weeping up the slope.

He caught Philammon in his trunk and raised him high in air. For an instant the great bellowing ocean of heads spun round and round. He tried to breathe one prayer, and shut his eyes — Pelagia's voice rang sweet and clear, even in the shrillness of intensest agony —

"Spare him! He is my brother! Forgive him, men of Macedonia! For Pelagia's sake — Your Pelagia! One boon — only this one!"

And she stretched her arms imploringly toward the spectators; and then clasping the huge knees of the elephant, called madly to it in terms of passionate entreaty and endearment.

The men wavered. The brute did not. Quietly he lowered his trunk, and set down Philammon on his feet. The monk was saved. Breathless and dizzy, he found himself hurried away by the attendants, dragged through dark passages, and hurled out into the street, with curses, warnings, and congratulations, which fell on an unheeding ear.

But Pelagia kept her face still hidden in her hands, and rising, walked slowly back, crushed by the weight of some tremendous awe, across the orchestra, and up the slope; and vanished among the palms and oleanders, regardless of the applause and entreaties,

and jeers, and threats, and curses, of that great multitude of sinful slaves.

For a moment all Orestes' spells seemed broken by this unexpected catastrophe. A cloud, whether of disgust or of disappointment, hung upon every brow. More than one Christian rose hastily to depart, touched with real remorse and shame at the horrors of which they had been the willing witnesses. The common people behind, having glutted their curiosity with all that there was to see, began openly to murmur at the cruelty and heathenry of it. Hypatia, utterly unnerved, hid her face in both her hands. Orestes alone rose with the crisis. Now, or never, was the time for action; and stepping forward, with his most graceful obeisance, waved his hand for silence, and began his well-studied oration.

"Let me not, O men of Macedonia, suppose that you can be disturbed from that equanimity which befits politicians, by so light an accident as the caprice of a dancer. The spectacle which I have had the honour and delight of exhibiting to you — (Roars and applause from the liberated prisoners and the young gentlemen) — and on which it seemed to me you have deigned to look with not altogether unkindly eyes — (Fresh applause, in which the Christian mob, relenting, began to join) — is but a pleasant prelude to that more serious business for which I have drawn you here together. Other testimonies of my good intentions have not been wanting in the release of suffering innocence, and in the largess of food, the growth and natural property of Egypt, destined by your late tyrants to pamper the luxury of a distant court. . . . Why should I boast? — yet even now this head is

weary, these limbs fail me, worn out in ceaseless efforts for your welfare, and in the perpetual administration of the strictest justice. For a time has come in which the Macedonian race, whose boast is the gorgeous city of Alexander, must rise again to that political pre-eminence which they held of old, and becoming once more the masters of one-third of the universe, be treated by their rulers as freemen, citizens, heroes, who have a right to choose and to employ their rulers — Rulers, did I say? Let us forget the word, and substitute in its place the more philosophic term of ministers. To be your minister — the servant of you all — To sacrifice myself, my leisure, health, life, if need be, to the one great object of securing the independence of Alexandria — This is my work, my hope, my glory — longed for through weary years; now for the first time possible by the fall of the late puppet Emperor of Rome. Men of Macedonia, remember that Honorious reigns no more! An African sits on the throne of the Cæsars! Heraclian, by one decisive victory, has gained, by the favour of — of Heaven, the imperial purple; and a new era opens for the world. Let the conqueror of Rome balance his account with that Byzantine court, so long the incubus of our Trans-Mediterranean wealth and civilization; and let a free, independent, and united Africa rally round the palaces and docks of Alexandria, and find there its natural centre of polity and of prosperity."

A roar of hired applause interrupted him: and not a few, half for the sake of his compliments and fine words, half from a natural wish to be on the right side — namely, the one which happened to be in the ascendant for the time being — joined. . . . . The city

authorities were on the point of crying, "Imperator Orestes:" but thought better of it; and waited for some one else to cry first — being respectable. Whereon the Prefect of the Guards, being a man of some presence of mind, and also not in anywise respectable, pricked up the Prefect of the Docks with the point of his dagger, and bade him, with a fearful threat, take care how he played traitor. The worthy burgher roared incontinently — whether with pain or patriotism; and the whole array of respectabilities — having found a Curtius who would leap into the gulf, joined in unanimous chorus, and saluted Orestes as Emperor; while Hypatia, amid the shouts of her aristocratic scholars, rose and knelt before him, writhing inwardly with shame and despair, and entreated him to accept that tutelage of Greek commerce, supremacy, and philosophy which was forced on him by the unanimous voice of an adoring people. . . . .

"It is false!" shouted a voice from the highest tiers, appropriated to the women of the lower classes, which made all turn their heads in bewilderment.

"False! false! You are tricked! He is tricked! Heraclian was utterly routed at Ostia, and is fled to Carthage, with the emperor's fleet in chase."

"She lies! Drag the beast down!" cried Orestes, utterly thrown off his balance by the sudden check.

"She? He! I, a monk, brought the news! Cyril has known it — every Jew in the Delta has known it, for a week past! So perish all the enemies of the Lord, caught in their own snare!"

And bursting desperately through the women who surrounded him, the monk vanished.

An awful silence fell on all who heard. For a minute every man looked in his neighbour's face as if he longed to cut his throat, and get rid of one witness, at least, of his treason. And then arose a tumult, which Orestes in vain attempted to subdue. Whether the populace believed the monk's words or not, they were panic-stricken at the mere possibility of their truth. Hoarse with denying, protesting, appealing, the would-be emperor had at last to summon his guards around him and Hypatia, and make his way out of the theatre as best he could; while the multitude melted away like snow before the rain, and poured out into the streets in eddying and roaring streams, to find every church placarded by Cyril with the particulars of Heraclian's ruin.

CHAPTER VIII.

Nemesis.

THAT evening was a hideous one in the palace of Orestes. His agonies of disappointment, rage, and terror were at once so shameful and so fearful, that none of his slaves dare approach him; and it was not till late that his confidential secretary, the Chaldean eunuch, driven by terror of the exasperated Catholics, ventured into the tiger's den, and represented to him the immediate necessity for action.

What could he do? He was committed — Cyril only knew how deeply. What might not the wily archbishop have discovered? What might he not pretend to have discovered? What accusations might he not send off on the spot to the Byzantine Court?

"Let the gates be guarded, and no one allowed to leave the city," suggested the Chaldee.

"Keep in monks? as well keep in rats! No; we must send off a counter-report, instantly."

"What shall I say, your Excellency?" quoth the ready scribe, pulling out pen and inkhorn from his sash.

"What do I care? Any lie which comes to hand. What in the devil's name are you here for at all, but to invent a lie when I want one?"

"True, most noble," and the worthy sat meekly down to his paper . . . but did not proceed rapidly.

"I don't see anything that would suit the emergency, unless I stated, with your august leave, that Cyril, and not you, celebrated the gladiatorial exhibition; which might hardly appear credible?"

Orestes burst out laughing, in spite of himself. The sleek Chaldee smiled, and purred in return. The victory was won; and Orestes, somewhat more master of himself, began to turn his vulpine cunning to the one absorbing question of the saving of his worthless neck.

"No, that would be too good. Write, that we had discovered a plot on Cyril's part to incorporate the whole of the African churches (mind and specify Carthage and Hippo) under his own jurisdiction, and to throw off allegiance to the Patriarch of Constantinople, in case of Heraclian's success."

The secretary purred delighted approval, and scribbled away now with right good heart.

"Heraclian's success, your Excellency."

"We of course desired, by every means in our power, to gratify the people of Alexandria, and as was our duty, to excite by every lawful method their loyalty toward the throne of the Cæsars (never mind who sat on it) at so critical a moment."

"So critical a moment" . . .

"But as faithful Catholics, and abhorring, even in the extremest need, the sin of Uzzah, we dreaded to touch with the unsanctified hands of laymen the consecrated ark of the Church, even though for its preservation."

"Its preservation, your Excellency . . ."

"We, therefore, as civil magistrates, felt bound to confine ourselves to those means which were already

allowed by law and custom to our jurisdiction; and accordingly made use of those largesses, spectacles, and public execution of rebels, which have unhappily appeared to his holiness the patriarch (too ready, perhaps, to find a cause of complaint against faithful adherents of the Byzantine See) to partake of the nature of those gladiatorial exhibitions, which are equally abhorrent to the spirit of the Catholic church, and to the charity of the sainted emperors by whose pious edicts they have been long since abolished."

"Your Excellency is indeed great . . . . but — pardon your slave's remark — my simplicity is of opinion that it may be asked why you did not inform the Augusta Pulcheria of Cyril's conspiracy?"

"Say that we sent a messenger off three months ago, but that. . . . Make something happen to him, stupid, and save me the trouble."

"Shall I kill him by Arabs in the neighbourhood of Palmyra, your Excellency?"

"Let me see. . . . No. They may make inquiries there. Drown him at sea. Nobody can ask questions of the sharks."

"Foundered between Tyre and Crete, from which sad calamity only one man escaped on a raft, and being picked up, after three weeks' exposure to the fury of the elements, by a returning wheat-ship — By the by, most noble, what am I to say about those wheat-ships not having even sailed?"

"Head of Augustus! I forgot them utterly. Say that — say that the plague was making such ravages in the harbour quarter that we feared their carrying the infection to the seat of the empire; and let them sail to-morrow."

The secretary's face lengthened.

"My fidelity is compelled to remark, even at the risk of your just indignation, that half of them have been unloaded again for your munificent largesses of the last two days."

Orestes swore a great oath.

"Oh, that the mob had but one throat, that I might give them an emetic! Well, we must buy more corn, that's all."

The secretary's face grew longer still.

"The Jews, most august —"

"What of them?" yelled the hapless Prefect. "Have they been forestalling?"

"My assiduity has discovered this afternoon that they have been buying up and exporting all the provisions which they could obtain."

"Scoundrels! Then they must have known of Heraclian's failure!"

"Your sagacity has, I fear, divined the truth. They have been betting largely against his success for the last week, both in Canopus and Pelusium."

"For the last week! Then Miriam betrayed me knowingly!" And Orestes broke forth again into a paroxysm of fury.

"Here — call the tribune of the guard! A hundred gold pieces to the man who brings me the witch alive!"

"She will never be taken alive."

"Dead, then — in any way! Go, you Chaldee hound! what are you hesitating about!"

"Most noble lord," said the secretary, prostrating himself upon the floor, and kissing his master's feet in an agony of fear . . . "Remember, that if you

touch one Jew you touch all! Remember the bonds! remember the — the — your own most august reputation, in short."

"Get up, brute, and don't grovel there, but tell me what you mean, like a human being. If Old Miriam is once dead, her bonds die with her, don't they?"

"Alas, my lord, you do not know the customs of that accursed folk. They have a damnable practice of treating every member of their nation as a brother, and helping each freely and faithfully without reward; whereby they are enabled to plunder all the rest of the world, and thrive themselves, from the least to the greatest. Don't fancy that your bonds are in Miriam's hands. They have been transferred months ago. Your real creditors may be in Carthage, or Rome, or Byzantium, and they will attack you from thence; while all that you would find if you seized the old witch's property, would be papers, useless to you, belonging to Jews all over the empire, who would rise as one man in defence of their money. I assure you, it is a net without a bound. If you touch one you touch all. . . . And besides, my diligence, expecting some such command, has already taken the liberty of making inquiries as to Miriam's place of abode; but it appears, I am sorry to say, utterly unknown to any of your Excellency's servants."

"You lie!" said Orestes. . . . "I would much sooner believe that you have been warning the hag to keep out of the way."

Orestes had spoken, for that once in his life, the exact truth.

The secretary, who had his own private dealings with Miriam, felt every particular atom of his skin

shudder at those words; and had he had hair on his head, it would certainly have betrayed him by standing visibly on end. But as he was, luckily for him, close shaven, his turban remained in its proper place, as he meekly replied, —

"Alas! a faithful servant can feel no keener woe than the causeless suspicion of that sun before whose rays he daily prostrates his —"

"Confound your periphrases! Do you know where she is?"

"No!" cried the wretched secretary, driven to the lie direct at last; and confirmed the negation with such a string of oaths, that Orestes stopped his volubility with a kick, borrowed of him, under threat of torture, a thousand gold pieces as largess to the soldiery, and ended by concentrating the stationaries round his own palace, for the double purpose of protecting himself in case of a riot, and of increasing the chances of the said riot, by leaving the distant quarters of the city without police.

"If Cyril would but make a fool of himself, now that he is in the full-blown pride of victory — the rascal! — about that Ammonius, or about Hypatia, or anything else, and give me a real handle against him! After all, truth works better than lying now and then. Oh, that I could poison him! But one can't bribe those ecclesiastics; and as for the dagger, one could not hire a man to be torn in pieces by monks. No; I must just sit still, and see what Fortune's dice may turn up. Well; your pedants like Aristides or Epaminondas — thank Heaven, the race of them has died out long ago! might call this no very creditable piece of provincial legislation; but, after all, it is about as good as any

now going, or likely to be going till the world's
and one can't be expected to strike out a new pat
shall stick to the wisdom of my predecessors, and
that Cyril may make a fool of himself to-night!"

And Cyril did make a fool of himself that n
for the first and last time in his life; and suffers f
as wise men are wont to do when they err, to this
day and hour: but how much Orestes gained by
foe's false move cannot be decided till the end of
story; perhaps not even then.

CHAPTER IX.

Lost Lambs.

And Philammon?

For a long while he stood in the street outside the heatre, too much maddened to determine on any course of action; and, ere he had recovered his self-possession, he crowd began to pour from every outlet, and filling he street, swept him away in its stream.

Then, as he heard his sister's name, in every tone of pity, contempt, and horror, mingle with their angry exclamations, he awoke from his dream, and, bursting through the mob, made straight for Pelagia's house.

It was fast closed; and his repeated knocks at the gate brought only, after long waiting, a surly negro face to a little wicket.

He asked eagerly and instinctively for Pelagia: of course she had not yet returned. For Wulf: he was not within. And then he took his station close to the gateway, while his heart beat loud with hope and dread.

At last the Goths appeared, forcing their way through he mob in a close column. There were no litters with hem. Where, then, were Pelagia and her girls? Where, too, was the hated figure of the Amal? and Wulf, and Smid? The men came on, led by Goderic and Agilmund, with folded arms, knitted brows, down-ast eyes; a stern disgust, not unmingled with shame, n every countenance, told Philammon afresh of his ister's infamy.

Goderic passed him close, and Philammon summoned up courage to ask for Wulf . . . . Pelagia he had not courage to name.

"Out, Greek hound! We have seen enough of your accursed race to-day! What? are you trying to follow us in?" And the young man's sword flashed from its sheath so swiftly, that Philammon had but just time enough to spring back into the street, and wait there, in an agony of disappointment and anxiety, as the gates slid together again, and the house was as silent as before.

For a miserable hour he waited, while the mob thickened instead of flowing away, and the scattered groups of chatterers began to form themselves into masses, and parade the streets with shouts of "Down with the heathen!" "Down with the idolaters!" "Vengeance on all blaspheming harlots!"

At last the steady tramp of legionaries, and in the midst of the glittering lines of armed men — oh, joy! a string of litters!

He sprang forward, and called Pelagia's name again and again. Once he fancied he heard an answer: but the soldiers thrust him back.

"She is safe here, young fool, and has seen and been seen quite enough to-day already. Back!"

"Let me speak to her!"

"That is her business. Ours is now to see her home safe."

"Let me go in with you, I beseech!"

"If you want to go in, knock for yourself when we are gone. If you have any business in the house, they will open to you, I suppose. Out, you interfering puppy!"

And a blow of the spear-butt in his chest sent him

rolling back into the middle of the street, while the soldiers, having delivered up their charge, returned with the same stolid indifference. In vain Philammon, returning, knocked at the gate. Curses and threats from the negro were all the answer which he received; and at last, wearied into desperation, he wandered away, up one street and down another, struggling in vain to form some plan of action for himself, until the sun was set.

Wearily he went homewards at last. Once the thought of Miriam crossed his mind. It was a disgusting alternative to ask help of her, the very author of his sister's shame: but yet she at least could obtain for him a sight of Pelagia; she had promised as much. But then — the condition which she had appended to her help! To see his sister, and yet to leave her as she was! — Horrible contradiction! But could he not employ Miriam for his own ends? — outwit her? — deceive her? — for it came to that. The temptation was intense: but it lasted only a moment. Could he defile so pure a cause by falsehood? And hurrying past the Jewess's door, hardly daring to look at it, lest the temptation should return, he darted up stairs to his own little chamber, hastily flung open the door, and stopped short in astonishment.

A woman covered from head to foot in a large dark veil, stood in the centre of the chamber.

"Who are you? This is no place for you!" cried he, after a minute's pause. She replied only by a shudder and a sob. . . . . He caught sight, beneath the folds of the veil, of a too-well-known saffron shawl, and springing upon her like the lion on the lamb, clasped to his bosom his sister.

The veil fell from her beautiful forehead. She gazed into his eyes one moment with a look of terrified inquiry, and saw nothing there but love. . . . . And clinging heart to heart, brother and sister mingled holy kisses, and strained nearer and nearer still, as if to satisfy their last lingering doubts of each other's kin.

Many a minute passed in silent joy. . . . . Philammon dare not speak; he dare not ask her what brought her thither — dare not wake her to recollect the frightful present by questions of the past, of his long-forgotten parents, their home, her history. . . . . And, after all, was it not enough for him that he held her at last? — her, there by her own will — the lost lamb returned to him? — and their tears mingled as their cheeks were pressed together.

At last she spoke.

"I ought to have known you, — I believe I did know you from the first day! When they mentioned your likeness to me, my heart leapt up within me; and a voice whispered . . . . but I would not hear it! I was ashamed to acknowledge my brother, for whom I had sought and longed for years . . . . ashamed to think that I had a brother. . . . . Ah God! and ought I not to be ashamed?"

And she broke from him again, and threw herself on the floor.

"Trample upon me; curse me! — anything but part me from him!"

Philammon had not the heart to answer her; but he made an involuntary gesture of sorrowful dissent.

"No! Call me what I am! — what he called me just now! — but do not take me away! Strike me, as he struck me! — anything but parting!"

"Struck you? The curse of God be on him!"

"Ah, do not curse him! — not him! It was not a low, indeed! — only a push — a touch — and it was ıy fault — all mine: I angered him — I upbraided im; — I was mad. . . . . Oh, why did he deceive me? Vhy did he let me dance? — command me to dance?"

"Command you?"

"He said, that we must not break our words. He ould not hear me, when I told him that we could deny aving promised. I said that promises made over the ine need never be kept. . . . . Who ever heard of eeping them? And Orestes was drunk, too. But he aid that I might teach a Goth to be what I liked, exept a liar. . . . . Was not that a strange speech? . . . . ınd Wulf bade him be strong, and blest him for it."

"He was right," sobbed Philammon.

"Then I thought he would love me for obeying im, though I loathed it! — Oh God, how I loathed :! . . . . But how could I fancy that he did not like ıy doing it? Who ever heard of any one doing of heir own will what they did not like?"

Philammon sobbed again, as the poor civilized avage artlessly opened to him all her moral darkness. Vhat could he say . . . . He knew what to say. The isease was so utterly patent, that any of Cyril's schoolhildren could have supplied the remedy. But how to peak it? — how to tell her, before all things, as he ɔnged to do, that there was no hope of her marrying ıe Amal, and, therefore, no peace for her till she ɔft him?

"Then you did hate the — the" said he, at last, atching at some gleam of light.

"Hate it? Do I not belong, body and soul, to

him? — him only? . . . And yet . . . Oh, I must tell you all! When I and the girls began to practise, all the old feelings came back — the love of being admired, and applauded, and cheered; and dancing is so delicious! — so delicious to feel that you are doing anything beautiful perfectly, and better than every one else! . . . And he saw that I liked it, and despised me for it. . . . And, deceitful! — he little guessed how much of the pains which I took were taken to please him, to do my best before him, to win admiration, only that I might take it home and throw it all at his beloved feet, and make the world say once more, 'She has all Alexandria to worship her, and yet she cares for that one Goth more than for' — But he deceived me, true man that he is! He wished to enjoy my smiles to the last moment, and then to cast me off, when I had once given him an excuse. . . . Too cowardly to upbraid me, he let me ruin myself, to save him the trouble of ruining me. Oh men, men! all alike! They love us for their own sakes, and we love them for love's sake. We live by love, we die for love, and yet we never find it, but only selfishness drest up in love's mask. . . . . And then we take up with that, poor, fond, self-blinded creatures that we are! — and in spite of the poisoned hearts around us, persuade ourselves that our latest asp's egg, at least, will hatch into a dove, and that though all men are faithless, our own tyrant can never change, for he is more than man!"

"But he has deceived you! You have found out your mistake. Leave him, then, as he deserves!"

Pelagia looked up, with something of a tender smile. "Poor darling! Little do you know of love!"

Philammon, utterly bewildered by this newest and

strangest phase of human passion, could only gasp out —

"But do you not love me, too, my sister?"

"Do I not love you? But not as I love him! Oh, hush, hush! — you cannot understand yet!" And Pelagia hid her face in her hands, while convulsive shudderings ran through every limb. . . .

"I must do it! I must! I will dare everything, stoop to everything, for love's sake! Go to her! — to the wise woman! — to Hypatia! She loves you! I know that she loves you! She will hear you, though she will not me!"

"Hypatia? Do you not know that she was sitting there unmoved at — in the theatre?"

"She was forced! Orestes compelled her! Miriam told me so. And I saw it in her face. As I passed beneath her, I looked up; and she was as pale as ivory, trembling in every limb. There was a dark hollow round her eyes — she had been weeping, I saw. And I sneered in my mad self-conceit, and said, 'She looks as if she was going to be crucified, not married!' . . . . But now, now! — Oh, go to her! Tell her that I will give her all I have — jewels, money, dresses, house! Tell her that I — I — entreat her pardon, that I will crawl to her feet myself and ask it, if she requires! — Only let her teach me — teach me to be wise and good, and honoured, and respected, as she is! Ask her to tell a poor broken-hearted woman her secret. She can make old Wulf, and him, and Orestes even, and the magistrates, respect her. . . . . Ask her to teach me how to be like her, and to make him respect me again, and I will give her all — all!"

Philammon hesitated. Something within warned

him, as the Dæmon used to warn Socrates, that his errand would be bootless. He thought of the theatre, and of that firm, compressed lip: and forgot the hollow eye of misery which accompanied it, in his wrath against his lately-worshipped idol.

"Oh, go! go! I tell you, it was against her will. She felt for me — I saw it — Oh, God! — when I did not feel for myself! And I hated her, because she seemed to despise me in my fool's triumph! She cannot despise me now in my misery. . . . . Go! Go! or you will drive me to the agony of going myself."

There was but one thing to be done.

"You will wait then, here? You will not leave me again?"

"Yes. But you must be quick! If he finds out that I am away, he may fancy . . . . Ah, heaven! let him kill me, but never let him be jealous of me! Go now! this moment! Take this as an earnest — the cestus which I wore there. Horrid thing! I hate the sight of it! But I brought it with me on purpose, or I would have thrown it into the canal. There; say it is an earnest — only an earnest — of what I will give her!"

In ten minutes more Philammon was in Hypatia's hall. The household seemed full of terror and disturbance; the hall was full of soldiers. At last Hypatia's favourite maid passed, and knew him. Her mistress could not speak with any one. Where was Theon, then? He, too, had shut himself up. Never mind. Philammon must, would speak with him. And he pleaded so passionately and so sweetly, that the soft-hearted damsel, unable to resist so handsome a suppliant, undertook his errand, and led him up to the

library, where Theon, pale as death, was pacing to and fro, apparently half beside himself with terror.

Philammon's breathless message fell at first upon unheeding ears.

"A new pupil, sir! Is this a time for pupils; when my house, my daughter's life, is not safe? Wretch that I am! And have I led her into the snare! I, with my vain ambition and covetousness! Oh, my child! my child! my one treasure! Oh, the double curse which will light upon me, if —"

"She asks for but one interview."

"With my daughter, sir? Pelagia? Will you insult me? Do you suppose, even if her own pity should so far tempt her to degrade herself, that I could allow her so to contaminate her purity?"

"Your terror, sir, excuses your rudeness."

"Rudeness, sir? the rudeness lies in your intruding on us at such a moment!"

"Then this, perhaps, may, in your eyes at least, excuse me in my turn." And Philammon held out the cestus. "You are a better judge of its value than I. But I am commissioned to say, that it is only an earnest of what she will give willingly and at once, even to the half of her wealth, for the honour of becoming your daughter's pupil." And he laid the jewelled girdle on the table.

The old man halted in his walk. The emeralds and pearls shone like the galaxy. He looked at them; and walked on again more slowly .... What might be their value? What might it not be? At least, they would pay all his debts .... And after hovering to and fro for another minute before the bait, he turned

to Philammon. "If you would promise to mention the thing to no one —"

"I will promise."

"And in case my daughter, as I have a right to expect, shall refuse —"

"Let her keep the jewels. Their owner has learnt, thank God, to despise and hate them! Let her keep the jewels — and my curse! For God do so to me, and more also, if I ever see her face again!"

The old man had not heard the latter part of Philammon's speech. He had seized his bait as greedily as a crocodile, and hurried off with it into Hypatia's chamber, while Philammon stood expectant; possessed with a new and fearful doubt. "Degrade herself?" "Contaminate her purity!" If that notion were to be the fruit of all her philosophy? If selfishness, pride, Pharisaism, were all its outcome? Why — had they not been its outcome already? When had he seen her helping, even pitying, the poor, the outcast? When had he heard from her one word of real sympathy for the sorrowing; for the sinful? . . . . He was still lost in thought when Theon re-entered, bringing a letter.

"From Hypatia to her well-beloved pupil.

"I pity you — how should I not? And more, I thank you for this your request, for it shows me that my unwilling presence at the hideous pageant of to-day has not alienated from me a soul of which I had cherished the noblest hopes, for which I had sketched out the loftiest destiny. But — how shall I say it? Ask yourself whether a change — apparently impossible — must not take place in her for whom you plead, before she and I can meet? I am not so inhuman as to blame you for having asked me; I do not

even blame her for being what she is. She does but follow her nature; who can be angry with her, if destiny have informed so fair an animal with a too gross and earthly spirit? Why weep over her? Dust she is, and unto dust she will return: while you, to whom a more divine spark was allotted at your birth, must rise, and unrepining, leave below you one only connected with you by the unreal and fleeting bonds of fleshly kin."

Philammon crushed the letter together in his hand, and strode from the house without a word.

The philosopher had no gospel, then, for the harlot! No word for the sinner, the degraded! Destiny, forsooth! She was to follow her destiny, and be base, miserable, self-condemned. She was to crush the voice of conscience and reason, as often as it awoke within her, and compel herself to believe that she was bound to be that which she knew herself bound not to be. She was to shut her eyes to that present palpable misery which was preaching to her, with the voice of God himself, that the wages of sin are death. Dust she was, and unto dust she will return! Oh, glorious hope for her, for him, who felt as if an eternity of bliss would be worthless, if it parted him from his new-found treasure! Dust she was, and unto dust she must return!

Hapless Hypatia! If she must needs misapply, after the fashion of her school, a text or two here and there from the Hebrew Scriptures, what suicidal fantasy set her on quoting that one? For now, upon Philammon's memory flashed up in letters of light, old words forgotten for months — and ere he was aware, he found himself repeating aloud and passionately, "I be-

lieve in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting," .... and then clear and fair arose before him the vision of the God-man, as He lay at meat in the Pharisee's house; and of her who washed His feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. .... And from the depths of his agonized heart arose the prayer, "Blessed Magdalene, intercede for her!"

So high he could rise: but not beyond. For the notion of That God-man was receding fast to more and more awful and abysmal heights, in the minds of a generation who were forgetting His love in His power, and practically losing sight of His humanity in their eager doctrinal assertion of His Divinity. And Philammon's heart re-echoed the spirit of his age, when he felt that for an apostate like himself it were presumptuous to entreat for any light or help from the fountain-head itself. He who had denied his Lord, he who had voluntarily cut himself off from the communion of the Catholic church — how could he restore himself? How could he appease the wrath of Him who died on cross, save by years of bitter supplication and self-punishment? . . .

"Fool! Vain and ambitious fool that I have been! For this I threw away the faith of my childhood! For this I listened to words at which I shuddered; crushed down my own doubts and disgusts; tried to persuade myself that I could reconcile them with Christianity — that I could make a lie fit into the truth! For this I puffed myself up in the vain hope of becoming not as other men are — superior, forsooth, to my kind! It was not enough for me to be a man made in the image of God: but I must needs become a god myself,

knowing good and evil. — And here is the end! I call upon my fine philosophy to help me once, in one real practical human struggle, and it folds its arms and sits serene and silent, smiling upon my misery! Oh fool, fool, thou art filled with the fruit of thy own devices! Back to the old faith! Home again, thou wanderer! And yet how home? Are not the gates shut against me? Perhaps against her too. . . . What if she, like me, were a baptized Christian?"

Terrible and all but hopeless that thought flashed across him, as in the first revulsion of his conscience he plunged utterly and implicitly back again into the faith of his childhood, and all the dark and cruel theories popular in his day rose up before him in all their terrors. In the innocent simplicity of the Laura, he had never felt their force; but he felt them now. If Pelagia were a baptized woman, what was before her but unceasing penance? Before her, as before him, a life of cold and hunger, groans and tears, loneliness and hideous soul-sickening uncertainty. Life was a dungeon for them both henceforth. Be it so! There was nothing else to believe in. No other rock of hope in earth or heaven. That at least promised a possibility of forgiveness, of amendment, of virtue, of reward — ay, of everlasting bliss and glory: and even if she missed of that, better for her the cell in the desert than a life of self-contented impurity! If that latter were her destiny, as Hypatia said, she should at least die fighting against it, defying it, cursing it! Better virtue with hell, than sin with heaven! And Hypatia had not even promised her a heaven. The resurrection of the flesh was too carnal a notion for her refined and lofty creed. And so, his four months' dream swept away in a moment,

he hurried back to his chamber, with one fixed thought before him — the desert; a cell for Pelagia; another for himself. There they would repent, and pray, and mourn out life side by side, if perhaps God would have mercy upon their souls. Yet — perhaps, she might not have been baptized after all. And then she was safe. Like other converts from Paganism, she might become a catechumen, and go on to baptism, where the mystic water would wash away in a moment all the past, and she would begin life afresh, in the spotless robes of innocence. Yet he had been baptized, he knew from Arsenius, before he left Athens; and she was older than he. It was all but impossible: yet he would hope; and breathless with anxiety and excitement, he ran up the narrow stairs and found Miriam standing outside, her hand upon the bolt, apparently inclined to dispute his passage.

"Is she still within?"

"What if she be?"

"Let me pass into my own room."

"Yours? Who has been paying the rent for you, these four months past? You? What can you say to her? What can you do for her? Young pedant, you must be in love yourself before you can help poor creatures who are in love!"

But Philammon pushed past her so fiercely, that the old woman was forced to give way, and with a sinister smile she followed him into the chamber.

Pelagia sprang towards her brother.

"Will she? — will she see me?"

"Let us talk no more of her, my beloved," said Philammon, laying his hands gently on her trembling shoulders, and looking earnestly into her eyes. . . .

"Better that we two should work out our deliverance for ourselves, without the help of strangers. You can trust me?"

"You? And can you help me? Will you teach me?"

"Yes, but not here. . . . We must escape — Nay, hear me, one moment! dearest sister, hear me! Are you so happy here that you can conceive of no better place! And — and, oh, God! that it may not be true after all! — but is there not a hell hereafter?"

Pelagia covered her face with her hands — "The old monk warned me of it!"

"Oh, take his warning." . . . And Philammon was bursting forth with some such words about the lake of fire and brimstone as he had been accustomed to hear from Pambo and Arsenius, when Pelagia interrupted him —

"Oh, Miriam! Is it true? Is it possible? What will become of me?" almost shrieked the poor child.

"What if it were true? — Let him tell you how he will save you from it," answered Miriam, quietly.

"Will not the Gospel save her from it — unbelieving Jew? Do not contradict me! I can save her."

"If she does what?"

"Can she not repent? Can she not mortify these base affections? Can she not be forgiven? Oh, my Pelagia! forgive me for having dreamed one moment that I could make you a philosopher, when you may be a saint of God, a —"

He stopped short suddenly, as the thought about baptism flashed across him, and in a faltering voice asked, "Are you baptized?"

"Baptized?" asked she, hardly understanding the term.

"Yes — by the bishop — in the church."

"Ah," she said, "I remember now. . . . . When I was four or five years old. . . . A tank, and women undressing. . . . And I was bathed too, and an old man dipped my head under the water three times. . . . I have forgotten what it all meant — it was so long ago. I wore a white dress, I know, afterwards."

Philammon recoiled with a groan.

"Unhappy child! May God have mercy on you!"

"Will he not forgive me, then? You have forgiven me. He? — he must be more good even than you. — Why not?"

"He forgave you then, freely, when you were baptized: and there is no second pardon, unless —"

"Unless I leave my love?" shrieked Pelagia.

"When the Lord forgave the blessed Magdalene freely, and told her that her faith had saved her — did she live on in sin, or even in the pleasures of this world? No! though God had forgiven her, she could not forgive herself. She fled forth into the desert, and there, naked and barefoot, clothed only with her hair, and feeding on the herb of the field, she stayed fasting and praying till her dying day, never seeing the face of man, but visited and comforted by angels and archangels. And if she, she who never fell again, needed that long penance to work out her own salvation — oh, Pelagia, what will not God require of you, who have broken your baptismal vows, and defiled the white robes, which the tears of penance only can wash clean once more?"

"But I did not know! I did not ask to be bap-

tized! Cruel, cruel parents, to bring me to it! And God! Oh, why did He forgive me so soon? And to go into the deserts! I dare not! I cannot! See me, how delicate and tender I am! I should die of hunger and cold! I should go mad with fear and loneliness! Oh! brother, brother, is this the Gospel of the Christians? I came to you to be taught how to be wise, and good, and respected, and you tell me that all I can do is to live this horrible life of torture here, on the chance of escaping torture for ever! And how do I know that I shall escape it? How do I know that I shall make myself miserable enough? How do I know that he will forgive me after all? Is this true, Miriam? Tell me, or I shall go mad!"

"Yes," said Miriam, with a quiet sneer. "This is the Gospel and good news of salvation, according to the doctrine of the Nazarenes."

"I will go with you!" cried Philammon. "I will go! I will never leave you! I have my own sins to wash away! — Happy for me if I ever do it! — And I will build you a cell near mine, and kind men will teach us, and we will pray together night and morning, for ourselves and for each other, and weep out our weary lives together —"

"Better end them here, at once!" said Pelagia, with a gesture of despair, and dashed herself down on the floor.

Philammon was about to lift her up, when Miriam caught him by the arm, and in a hurried whisper — "Are you mad? Will you ruin your own purpose? Why did you tell her this? Why did you not wait — give her hope — time to collect herself — time to wean herself from her lover, instead of terrifying and

disgusting her at the outset, as you have done? Have you a man's heart in you? No word of comfort for that poor creature, nothing but hell, hell, hell — See to your own chance of hell first! It is greater than you fancy!"

"It cannot be greater than I fancy!"

"Then see to it! For her, poor darling! — why, even we Jews, who know that all you Gentiles are doomed to Gehenna alike, have some sort of hope for such a poor untaught creature as that."

"And why is she untaught? Wretch that you are! You have had the training of her! You brought her up to sin and shame! You drove from her recollection the faith in which she was baptized!"

"So much the better for her, if the recollection of it is to make her no happier than it does already. Better to wake unexpectedly in Gehenna when you die, than to endure over and above the dread of it here. And as for leaving her untaught, on your own showing she has been taught too much already. Wiser it would be in you to curse your parents for having had her baptized, than me for giving her ten years pleasure before she goes to the pit of Tophet. Come, now, don't be angry with me. The old Jewess is your friend, revile her as you will. She shall marry this Goth."

"An Arian heretic?"

"She shall convert him and make a Catholic of him, if you like. At all events, if you wish to win her, you must win her my way. You have had your chance, and spoiled it. Let me have mine. Pelagia, darling! Up, and be a woman! We will find a philtre down stairs to give that ungrateful man, that shall make him

more mad about you, before a day is over, than ever you were about him."

"No!" said Pelagia, looking up. "No love-potions! No poisons!"

"Poisons, little fool! Do you doubt the old woman's skill? Do you think I shall make him lose his wits, as Callisphyra did to her lover last year, because she would trust to old Megæra's drugs, instead of coming to me?"

"No! No drugs; no magic! He must love me really, or not at all! He must love me for myself because I am worth loving, because he honours, worships me — or let me die! I, whose boast was even when I was basest, that I never needed such mean tricks, but conquered like Aphrodite, a queen in my own right! I have been my own love-charm; when I cease to be that, let me die!"

"One as mad as the other!" cried Miriam, in utter perplexity. "Hist! what is that tramp upon the stairs?"

At this moment heavy footsteps were heard ascending the stairs. . . . . All three stopped aghast: Philammon, because he thought the visitors were monks in search of him; Miriam, because she thought they were Orestes' guards in search of her; and Pelagia, from vague dread of anything and everything. . . . .

"Have you an inner room?" asked the Jewess.

"None."

The old woman set her lips firmly, and drew her dagger. Pelagia wrapped her face in her cloak, and stood trembling, bowed down, as if expecting another blow. The door opened, and in walked, neither monks nor guards, but Wulf and Smid.

"Heyday, young monk!" cried the latter worthy, with a loud laugh — "Veils here, too, eh? At your old trade, my worthy portress of hell-gate? Well, walk out now; we have a little business with this young gentleman."

And slipping past the unsuspected Goths, Pelagia and Miriam hurried down stairs.

"The young one, at least, seems a little ashamed of her errand. . . . . Now, Wulf, speak low; and I will see that no one is listening at the door."

Philammon faced his unexpected visitors with a look of angry inquiry. What right had they, or any man, to intrude at such a moment on his misery and disgrace? . . . But he was disarmed the next instant by old Wulf, who advanced to him, and looking him fully in the face with an expression which there was no mistaking, held out his broad brown hand.

Philammon grasped it, and then covering his face with his hands, burst into tears.

"You did right. You are a brave boy. If you had died, no man need have been ashamed to die your death."

"You were there, then?" sobbed Philammon.

"We were."

"And what is more," said Smid, as the poor boy writhed at the admission, "we were mightily minded, some of us, to have leapt down to you and cut you a passage out. One man at least, whom I know of, felt his old blood as hot for the minute as a four-year-old's. The foul curs! And to hoot her, after all! Oh that I may have one good hour's hewing at them before I die!"

"And you shall!" said Wulf. "Boy, you wish to get this sister of yours into your power?"

"It is hopeless — hopeless! She will never leave her — the Amal."

"Are you so sure of that?"

"She told me so with her own lips not ten minutes ago. That was she who went out as you entered!"

A curse of astonishment and regret burst from Smid. . . . .

"Had I but known her! By the soul of my fathers, she should have found that it was easier to come here than to go home again!"

"Hush, Smid! Better as it is. Boy, if I put her into your power, dare you carry her off?"

Philammon hesitated one moment.

"What I dare you know already. But it would be an unlawful thing, surely, to use violence."

"Settle your philosopher's doubts for yourself. I have made my offer. I should have thought that a man in his senses could give but one answer, much more a mad monk."

"You forget the money matters, prince," said Smid, with a smile.

"I do not. But I don't think the boy so mean as to hesitate on that account."

"He may as well know, however, that we promise to send all her trumpery after her, even to the Amal's presents. As for the house, we won't trouble her to lend it us longer than we can help. We intend shortly to move into more extensive premises, and open business on a grander scale, as these shop-keepers say, — eh, prince?"

"Her money? — That money? God forgive her!"

answered Philammon. "Do you fancy me base enough to touch it? But I am resolved. Tell me what to do, and I will do it."

"You know the lane which runs down to the canal, under the left wall of the house?"

"Yes."

"And a door in the corner tower, close to the landing-place?"

"I do."

"Be there, with a dozen stout monks, to-morrow, an hour after sundown, and take what we give you. After that, the concern is yours, not ours."

"Monks?" said Philammon. "I am at open feud with the whole order."

"Make friends with them, then," shortly suggested Smid.

Philammon writhed inwardly. "It makes no difference to you, I presume, whom I bring?"

"No more than it does whether or not you pitch her into the canal, and put a hurdle over her when you have got her," answered Smid; "which is what a Goth would do, if he were in your place."

"Do not vex the poor lad, friend. If he thinks he can mend her instead of punishing her, in Freya's name, let him try. You will be there, then? And mind, I like you. I liked you when you faced that great river-hog, I like you better now than ever; for you have spoken to-day like a Sagaman, and dared like a hero. Therefore mind; if you do not bring a good guard to-morrow night, your life will not be safe. The whole city is out in the streets; and Odin alone knows what will be done, and who will be alive, eight-and-forty hours hence. Mind you! — The mob may

do strange things, and they may see still stranger things done. If you once find yourself safe back here, stay where you are, if you value her life or your own. And — if you are wise, let the men whom you bring with you be monks, though it cost your proud stomach —"

"That's not fair, prince! You are telling too much!" interrupted Smid, while Philammon gulped down the said proud stomach, and answered, "Be it so!"

"I have won my bet, Smid," said the old man, chuckling, as the two tramped out into the street, to the surprise and fear of all the neighbours, while the children clapped their hands, and the street dogs felt it their duty to bark lustily at the strange figures of their unwonted visitors.

"No play, no pay, Wulf. We shall see to-morrow."

"I knew that he would stand the trial! I knew he was right at heart!"

"At all events, there is no fear of his ill-using the poor thing, if he loves her well enough to go down on his knees to his sworn foes for her."

"I don't know that," answered Wulf, with a shake of the head. "These monks, I hear, fancy that their God likes them the better the more miserable they are: so, perhaps they may fancy that he will like them all the more, the more miserable they make other people. However, it's no concern of ours."

"We have quite enough of our own to see to just now. But mind, no play, no pay."

"Of course not. How the streets are filling! We shall not be able to see the guards to-night, if this mob thickens much more."

"We shall have enough to do to hold our own, perhaps. Do you hear what they are crying there? 'Down with all heathens! Down with barbarians!' That means us, you know."

"Do you fancy no one understands Greek but yourself? Let them come. . . . . It may give us an excuse. . . . . And we can hold the house a week."

"But how can we get speech of the guards?"

"We will slip round by water. And after all, deeds will win them better than talk. They will be forced to fight on the same side as we, and most probably be glad of our help; for if the mob attacks any one, it will begin with the Prefect."

"And then — Curse their shouting! Let the soldiers once find our Amal at their head, and they will be ready to go with him a mile, where they meant to go a yard."

"The Goths will, and the Markmen, and those Dacians, and Thracians, or whatever the Romans call them. But I hardly trust the Huns."

"The curse of heaven on their pudding faces and pigs' eyes! There will be no love lost between us. But there are not twenty of them scattered in different troops; one of us can thrash three of them; and they will be sure to side with the winning party. Beside, plunder, plunder, comrade! When did you know a Hun turn back from that, even if he were only on the scent of a lump of tallow?"

"As for the Gauls and Latins," . . . went on Wulf, meditatively, "they belong to any man who can pay them." . . .

"Which we can do, like all wise generals, one

penny out of our own pocket, and nine out of the enemy's. And the Amal is staunch?"

"Staunch as his own hounds, now there is something to be done on the spot. His heart was in the right place after all. I knew it all along. But he could never in his life see four-and-twenty hours before him. Even now, if that Pelagia gets him under her spell again, he may throw down his sword, and fall as fast asleep as ever."

"Never fear: we have settled her destiny for her, as far as that is concerned. Look at the mob before the door! We must get in by the postern-gate."

"Get in by the sewer, like a rat! I go my own way. Draw, old hammer and tongs! or run away!"

"Not this time." And sword in hand, the two marched into the heart of the crowd, who gave way before them like a flock of sheep.

"They know their intended shepherds already," said Smid. But at that moment the crowd, seeing them about to enter the house, raised a yell of "Goths! Heathens! Barbarians!" and a rush from behind took place.

"If you will have it, then!" said Wulf. And the two long bright blades flashed round and round their heads, redder and redder every time they swung aloft.... The old men never even checked their steady walk, and knocking at the gate, went in, leaving more than one lifeless corpse at the entrance.

"We have put the coal in the thatch, now, with a vengeance," said Smid, as they wiped their swords inside.

"We have. Get me out a boat and half-a-dozen men, and I and Goderic will go round by the canal

to the palace, and settle a thing or two with the guards."

"Why should not the Amal go, and offer our help himself to the Prefect?"

"What? Would you have him after that turn against the hound? For troth and honour's sake, he must keep quiet in the matter."

"He will have no objection to keep quiet — trust him for that! But don't forget Sagaman Moneybag, the best of all orators," called Smid laughingly after him, as he went off to man the boat.

CHAPTER X.

Seeking after a Sign.

"WHAT answer has he sent back, father?" asked Hypatia, as Theon re-entered her chamber, after delivering that hapless letter to Philammon.

"Insolent that he is! he tore it to fragments, and fled forth without a word."

"Let him go, and desert us like the rest, in our calamity!"

"At least, we have the jewels."

"The jewels? Let them be returned to their owner. Shall we defile ourselves by taking them as wages for anything, — above all, for that which is unperformed?"

"But, my child, they were given to us freely. He bade me keep them; and — and, to tell you the truth, I must keep them. After this unfortunate failure, be sure of it, every creditor we have will be clamouring for payment."

"Let them take our house and furniture, and sell us as slaves, then. Let them take all, provided we keep our virtue."

"Sell us as slaves? Are you mad?"

"Not quite mad yet, father," answered she, with a sad smile. "But how should we be worse than we are now, were we slaves? Raphael Aben-Ezra told me

that he obeyed my precepts, when he went forth as a houseless beggar; and shall I not have courage to obey them myself, if the need come? The thought of his endurance has shamed my luxury for this many a month. After all, what does the philosopher require but bread and water, and the clear brook in which to wash away the daily stains of his earthly prison-house? Let what is fated come. Hypatia struggles with the stream no more!"

"My daughter! And have you given up all hope? So soon disheartened! What! is this paltry accident to sweep away the purposes of years? Orestes remains still faithful. His guards have orders to garrison the house for as long as we shall require them."

"Send them away, then. I have done no wrong, and I fear no punishment."

"You do not know the madness of the mob; they are shouting your name in the streets already, in company with Pelagia's."

Hypatia shuddered. Her name in company with Pelagia's! And to this she had brought herself!

"I have deserved it! I have sold myself to a lie and a disgrace! I have stooped to truckle, to intrigue! I have bound myself to a sordid trickster! Father! never mention his name to me again! I have leagued myself with the impure and the blood-thirsty, and I have my reward! No more politics for Hypatia from henceforth, my father; no more orations and lectures; no more pearls of Divine wisdom cast before swine. I have sinned in divulging the secrets of the Immortals to the mob. Let them follow their natures! Fool that I was, to fancy that my speech, my plots, could raise them above that which the Gods had made them!"

"Then you give up our lectures? Worse and worse! We shall be ruined utterly!"

"We are ruined utterly already. Orestes? There is no help in him. I know the man too well, my father, not to know that he would give us up to-morrow to the fury of the Christians, were his own base life — even his own baser office — in danger."

"Too true — too true! I fear," said the poor old man, wringing his hands in perplexity. "What will become of us, — of you, rather? What matter what happens to the useless old stargazer? Let him die! To-day or next year, is alike to him. But you, — you! Let us escape by the canal. We may gather up enough, even without these jewels, which you refuse, to pay our voyage to Athens, and there we shall be safe with Plutarch; he will welcome you — all Athens will welcome you — we will collect a fresh school — and you shall be Queen of Athens, as you have been Queen of Alexandria!"

"No, father. What I know, henceforth I will know for myself only. Hypatia will be from this day alone with the Immortal Gods!"

"You will not leave me?" cried the old man, terrified.

"Never on earth!" answered she, bursting into real human tears, and throwing herself on his bosom. "Never, — never! father of my spirit as well as of my flesh! — the parent who has trained me, taught me, educated my soul from the cradle to use her wings! — the only human being who never misunderstood me — never thwarted me — never deceived me!"

"My priceless child! And I have been the cause of your ruin!"

"Not you! — a thousand times not you! I only am to blame! I tampered with worldly politics. I tempted you on to fancy that I could effect what I so rashly undertook. Do not accuse yourself, unless you wish to break my heart! We can be happy together yet. — A palm-leaf hut in the desert, dates from the grove, and water from the spring — the monk dares be miserable alone in such a dwelling, and cannot we dare to be happy together in it?"

"Then you will escape?"

"Not to-day. It were base to flee before danger comes. We must hold out at our post to the last moment, even if we dare not die at it like heroes. And to-morrow I go to the lecture-room, — to the beloved Museum, for the last time, to take farewell of my pupils. Unworthy as they are, I owe it to myself and to philosophy, to tell them why I leave them."

"It will be too dangerous, — indeed it will!"

"I could take the guards with me, then. And yet — no. . . . They shall never have occasion to impute fear to the philosopher. Let them see her go forth as usual on her errand, strong in the courage of innocence, secure in the protection of the gods. So, perhaps, some sacred awe, some suspicion of her divineness, may fall on them at last."

"I must go with you."

"No, I go alone. You might incur danger, where I am safe. After all, I am a woman . . . . and, fierce as they are, they will not dare to harm me."

The old man shook his head.

"Look, now," she said, smilingly laying her hands on his shoulders, and looking into his face. . . . "You

tell me that I am beautiful, you know; and beauty will tame the lion. Do you not think that this face might disarm even a monk?"

And she laughed and blushed so sweetly, that the old man forgot his fears, as she intended that he should, and kissed her, and went his way for the time being, to command all manner of hospitalities to the soldiers, whom he prudently determined to keep in his house as long as he could make them stay there; in pursuance of which wise purpose, he contrived not to see a great deal of pleasant flirtation between his valiant defenders and Hypatia's maids, who, by no means so prudish as their mistress, welcomed as a rare boon from heaven an afternoon's chat with twenty tall men of war.

So they jested and laughed below, while old Theon, having brought out the very best old wine, and actually proposed in person, by way of mending matters, the health of the Emperor of Africa, locked himself into the library, and comforted his troubled soul with a tough problem of astronomy, which had been haunting him the whole day, even in the theatre itself. But Hypatia sat still in her chamber, her face buried in her hands, her heart full of many thoughts, her eyes of tears. She had smiled away her own.

She felt, she hardly knew why, but she felt as clearly as if a God had proclaimed it to her bodily ears, that the crisis of her life was come; that her political and active career was over, and that she must now be content to be for herself and in herself alone, all that she was, or might become. The world might be regenerated: but not in her day; — the gods restored: but not by her. It was a fearful discovery,

— and yet hardly a discovery. Her heart had told her for years that she was hoping against hope, — that she was struggling against a stream too mighty for her. And now the moment had come when she must either be swept helpless down the current, or, by one desperate effort, win firm land, and let the tide roll on its own way henceforth. . . . Its own way? . . . Not the way of the gods, at least; for it was sweeping their names from off the earth. What if they did not care to be known? What if they were weary of worship and reverence from mortal men, and, self-sufficing in their own perfect bliss, recked nothing for the weal or woe of earth? Must it not be so? Had she not proof of it in everything which she beheld? What did Isis care for her Alexandria? What did Athene care for her Athens? . . . And yet Homer and Hesiod, and those old Orphic singers, were of another mind. . . . Whence got they that strange fancy of gods counselling, warring, intermarrying with mankind, as with some kindred tribe?"

"Zeus, father of gods and men." . . . Those were words of hope and comfort. . . . But were they true? Father of men? Impossible! — not father of Pelagia, surely. Not father of the base, the foul, the ignorant. . . . Father of heroic souls, only, the poets must have meant. . . . But where were the heroic souls now? Was she one? If so, why was she deserted by the upper powers in her utter need? Was the heroic race indeed extinct? Was she merely assuming, in her self-conceit, an honour to which she had no claim? Or was it all a dream of these old singers? Had they, as some bold philosophers had said, invented gods in their own likeness, and palmed off on the awe and

admiration of men their own fair phantoms? . . . It must be so. If there were gods, to know them was the highest bliss of man. Then would they not teach men of themselves, unveil their own loveliness to a chosen few, even for the sake of their own honour, if not, as she had dreamed once, from love to those who bore a kindred flame to theirs? . . . What if there were no gods? What if the stream of fate, which was sweeping away their names, were the only real power? What if that old Pyrrhonic notion were the true solution of the problem of the Universe? What if there were no centre, no order, no rest, no goal, — but only a perpetual flux, a down-rushing change! And before her dizzying brain and heart arose that awful vision of Lucretius, of the homeless Universe, falling, falling, falling, for ever, from nowhence toward nowhither through the unending ages, by causeless and unceasing gravitation, while the changes and efforts of all mortal things were but the jostling of the dust-atoms amid the everlasting storm. . . .

It could not be! There was a truth, a virtue, a beauty, a nobleness, which could never change, but which were absolute, the same for ever. The god-given instinct of her woman's heart rebelled against her intellect, and, in the name of God, denied its lie. . . . . Yes, — there was virtue, beauty. . . . . And, yet — might not they, too, be accidents of that enchantment, which man calls mortal life; temporary and mutable accidents of consciousness; brilliant sparks, struck out by the clashing of the dust-atoms? Who could tell?

There were those once who could tell. Did not Plotinus speak of a direct mystic intuition of the Deity,

an enthusiasm without passion, a still intoxication of the soul, in which she rose above life, thought, reason, herself, to that which she contemplated, the absolute and first One, and united herself with that One, or, rather, became aware of that union which had existed from the first moment in which she emanated from the One? Six times in a life of sixty years had Plotinus risen to that height of mystic union, and known himself to be a part of God. Once had Porphyry attained the same glory. Hypatia, though often attempting, had never yet succeeded in attaining to any distinct vision of a being external to herself, though practice, a firm will, and a powerful imagination, had long since made her an adept in producing, almost at will, that mysterious trance, which was the preliminary step to super-natural vision. But her delight in the brilliant, and, as she held, divine imaginations, in which at such times she revelled, had been always checked and chilled by the knowledge that, in such matters, hundreds inferior to her in intellect and in learning, — ay, saddest of all, Christian monks and nuns, boasted themselves her equals, — indeed, if their own account of their visions was to be believed, her superiors — by the same methods which she employed. For by celibacy, rigorous fasts, perfect bodily quiescence, and intense contemplation of one thought, they, too, pretended to be able to rise above the body into the heavenly regions, and to behold things unspeakable, which, nevertheless, like most other unspeakable things, contrived to be most carefully detailed and noised abroad. . . . . And it was with a half feeling of shame that she prepared herself that afternoon for one more, perhaps one last attempt, to scale the heavens, as she

recollected how many an illiterate monk and nun, from Constantinople to the Thebaid, was probably employed at that moment exactly as she was. Still, the attempt must be made. In that terrible abyss of doubt, she must have something palpable, real; something beyond her own thoughts, and hopes, and speculations, whereon to rest her weary faith, her weary heart. . . . . Perhaps this time, at least, in her extremest need, a god might vouchsafe some glimpse of his own beauty. . . . . Athene might pity at last. . . . . Or, if not Athene, some archetype, angel, demon. . . . . And then she shuddered at the thought of those evil and deceiving spirits, whose delight it was to delude and tempt the votaries of the gods, in the forms of angels of light. But even in the face of that danger, she must make the trial once again. Was she not pure and spotless as Athene's self? Would not her innate purity enable her to discern, by an instinctive antipathy, those foul beings beneath the fairest mask? At least, she must make the trial. . . . .

And so, with a look of intense humility, she began to lay aside her jewels and her upper robes. Then, baring her bosom and her feet, and shaking her golden tresses loose, she laid herself down upon the couch, crossed her hands upon her breast, and, with upturned ecstatic eyes, waited for that which might befall.

There she lay, hour after hour, as her eye gradually kindled, her bosom heaved, her breath came fast: but there was no more sign of life in those straight still limbs, and listless feet and hands, than in Pygmalion's ivory bride, before she bloomed into human flesh and blood. The sun sank towards his

rest; the roar of the city grew louder and louder without; the soldiers revelled and laughed below: but every sound passed through unconscious ears, and went its way unheeded. Faith, hope, reason itself were staked upon the result of that daring effort to scale the highest heaven. And, by one continuous effort of her practised will, which reached its highest virtue, as mystics hold, in its own suicide, she chained down her senses from every sight and sound, and even her mind from every thought, and lay utterly self-resigned, self-emptied, till consciousness of time and place had vanished, and she seemed to herself alone in the abyss.

She dared not reflect, she dared not hope, she dared not rejoice, lest she should break the spell. . . . Again and again had she broken it at this very point, by some sudden and tumultuous yielding to her own joy or awe; but now her will held firm. . . . . She did not feel her own limbs, hear her own breath. . . . A light bright mist, an endless network of glittering films, coming, going, uniting, resolving themselves, was above her and around her. . . . Was she in the body or out of the body? . . .

* * * * *

The network faded into an abyss of still clear light. . . . . A still warm atmosphere was around her thrilling through and through her. . . . She breathed the light, and floated in it, as a mote in the midday beam. . . And still her will held firm.

* * * * *

Far away, miles, and æons, and abysses away through the interminable depths of glory, a dark and shadowy spot. It neared and grew. . . . A dark globe

ringed with rainbows. . . . What might it be? She dared not hope. . . . It came nearer, nearer, nearer, touched her. . . . The centre quivered, flickered, took form — a face. . . . A god's? No — Pelagia's!

Beautiful, sad, craving, reproachful, indignant, awful. . . . Hypatia could bear no more; and sprang to her feet with a shriek, to experience in its full bitterness the fearful revulsion of the mystic, when the human reason and will which he has spurned reassert their God-given rights; and after the intoxication of the imagination, comes its prostration and collapse.

And this, then, was the answer of the gods! The phantom of her whom she had despised, exposed, spurned from her! "No, not their answer — the answer of my own soul! Fool that I have been! I have been exerting my will most while I pretended to resign it most! I have been the slave of every mental desire, while I tried to trample on them! What if that network of light, that blaze, that globe of darkness, have been, like the face of Pelagia, the phantoms of my own imagination — ay, even of my own senses? What if I have mistaken for Deity my own self? What if I have been my own light, my own abyss? . . . . Am I not my own abyss, my own light — my own darkness?" And she smiled bitterly as she said it, and throwing herself again upon the couch, buried her head in her hands, exhausted equally in body and in mind.

At last she rose, and sat, careless of her dishevelled locks, gazing out into vacancy. "Oh, for a sign, for a token! Oh, for the golden days of which the poets sang, when gods walked among men, fought by their

side as friends! And yet .... are those old stories credible, pious, even modest? Does not my heart revolt from them? Who has shared more than I in Plato's contempt for the foul deeds, the degrading transformations, which Homer imputes to the gods of Greece? Must I believe them now? Must I stoop to think that gods, who live in a region above all sense, will deign to make themselves palpable to those senses of ours which are whole æons of existence below them? — degrade themselves to the base accidents of matter? Yes! That, rather than nothing! .... Be it even so. Better, better, better, to believe that Ares fled shrieking and wounded from a mortal man — better to believe in Jove's adulteries and Hermes' thefts — than to believe that gods have never spoken face to face with men! Let me think, lest I go mad, that beings from that unseen world for which I hunger have appeared, and held communion with mankind, such as no reason nor sense could doubt — even though those beings were more capricious and baser than ourselves! Is there, after all, an unseen world? Oh, for a sign, a sign!"

Haggard and dizzy, she wandered into her "chamber of the gods;" a collection of antiquities, which she kept there rather as matters of taste than of worship. All around her they looked out into vacancy with their white soulless eyeballs, their dead motionless beauty, those cold dreams of the buried generations. Oh that they could speak, and set her heart at rest! At the lower end of the room stood a Minerva, completely armed with ægis, spear, and helmet; a gem of Athenian sculpture, which she had bought from some merchants after the sack of Athens by the Goths.

There it stood, severely fair; but the right hand, alas! was gone; and there the maimed arm remained extended, as if in sad mockery of the faith of which the body remained, while the power was dead and vanished.

She gazed long and passionately on the image of her favourite goddess, the ideal to which she had longed for years to assimilate herself; till — was it a dream? was it a frolic of the dying sunlight? or did those lips really bend themselves into a smile?

Impossible! No, not impossible. Had not, only a few years before, the image of Hecate smiled on a philosopher? Were there not stories of moving images? and winking pictures, and all the material miracles by which a dying faith strives desperately — not to deceive others — but to persuade itself of its own sanity? It bad been — it might be — it was! —

No! there the lips were, as they had been from the beginning, closed upon each other in that stony self-collected calm, which was only not a sneer. The wonder, if it was one, had passed: and now — did her eyes play her false, or were the snakes round that Medusa's head upon the shield all writhing, grinning, glaring at her with stony eyes, longing to stiffen her with terror into their own likeness?

No! that, too, passed. Would that even it had stayed, for it would have been a sign of life! She looked up at the face once more: but in vain — the stone was stone; and ere she was aware, she found herself clasping passionately the knees of the marble.

"Athene! Pallas! Adored! Ever Virgin! Absolute reason, springing unbegotten from the nameless One! Hear me! Athene! Have mercy on me! Speak,

if it be to curse me! Thou who alone wieldest the lightnings of thy father, wield them to strike me dead, if thou wilt; only do something! — something to prove thine own existence — something to make me sure that anything exists beside this gross miserable matter, and my miserable soul. I stand alone in the centre of the universe! I fall and sicken down the abyss of ignorance, and doubt, and boundless blank and darkness! Oh, have mercy! I know that thou art not this! Thou art everywhere and in all things! But I know that this is a form which pleases thee, which symbolizes thy nobleness! I know that thou hast deigned to speak to those who — Oh! what do I know? Nothing! nothing! nothing!"

And she clung there, bedewing with scalding tears the cold feet of the image, while there was neither sign, nor voice, nor any that answered.

On a sudden she was startled by a rustling near; and, looking round, saw close behind her the old Jewess.

"Cry aloud!" hissed the hag, in a tone of bitter scorn; "Cry aloud, for she is a goddess. Either she is talking, or pursuing, or she is on a journey: or perhaps she has grown old, as we all shall do some day, my pretty lady, and is too cross and lazy to stir. What! her naughty doll will not speak to her, will it not? or even open its eyes, because the wires are grown rusty? Well, we will find a new doll for her, if she chooses."

"Begone, hag! What do you mean by intruding here?" said Hypatia, springing up; but the old woman went on coolly —

"Why not try the fair young gentleman over

there?" pointing to a copy of the Apollo which we call Belvedere — "What's his name? Old maids are always cross and jealous, you know. But he — he could not be cruel to such a sweet face as that. Try the young gentleman! Or perhaps, if you are bashful, the old Jewess might try him for you?"

These last words were spoken with so marked a significance, that Hypatia, in spite of her disgust, found herself asking the hag what she meant. She made no answer for a few seconds, but remained looking steadily into her eyes with a glance of fire, before which even the proud Hypatia, as she had done once before, quailed utterly, so deep was the understanding, so dogged the purpose, so fearless the power, which burned within those withered and sunken sockets.

"Shall the old witch call him up, the fair young Apollo, with the beauty-bloom upon his chin? He shall come! He shall come! I warrant him he must come, civilly enough, when old Miriam's finger is once held up."

"To you? Apollo, the god of light, obey a Jewess?"

"A Jewess? And you a Greek?" almost yelled the old woman. "And who are you who ask? And who are your gods, your heroes, your devils, you children of yesterday, compared with us! You, who were a set of half-naked savages squabbling about the siege of Troy, when our Solomon, amid splendours such as Rome and Constantinople never saw, was controlling demons and ghosts, angels and archangels, principalities and powers, by the ineffable name? What science have you that you have not stolen from the Egyptians and Chaldees? And what had the Egyptians

which Moses did not teach them? And what have the Chaldees which Daniel did not teach them? What does the world know but from us, the fathers and the masters of magic — us, the lords of the inner secrets of the universe? Come, you Greek baby — as the priests in Egypt said of your forefathers, always children, craving for a new toy, and throwing it away next day — come to the fountain-head of all your paltry wisdom! Name what you will see, and you shall see it!"

Hypatia was cowed; for of one thing there was no doubt — that the woman utterly believed her own words, and that was a state of mind of which she had seen so little, that it was no wonder if it acted on her with that overpowering sympathetic force with which it generally does, and perhaps ought, to act on the human heart. Besides, her school had always looked to the ancient nations of the East for the primeval founts of inspiration, the mysterious lore of mightier races long gone by. Might she not have found it now?

The Jewess saw her advantage in a moment, and ran on, without giving her time to answer —

"What sort shall it be, then? By glass and water, or by the moonlight on the wall, or by the sieve, or by the meal? By the cymbals, or by the stars? By the table of the twenty-four elements, by which the empire was promised to Theodosius the Great, or by the sacred counters of the Assyrians, or by the sapphire of the Hecatic sphere? Shall I threaten, as the Egyptian priests used to do, to tear Osiris again in pieces, or to divulge the mysteries of Isis? I could do it, if I chose; for I know them all, and more. Or shall I use the ineffable name on Solomon's seal, which we alone, of all the nations of the earth,

know? No; it would be a pity to waste that upon a heathen. It shall be by the sacred wafer. Look here! — here they are, the wonder-working atomies! Eat no food this day, except one of these every three hours, and come to me to-night at the house of your porter, Eudæmon, bringing with you the black agate; and then — why then, what you have the heart to see, you shall see!"

Hypatia took the wafers, hesitating —

"But what are they?"

"And you profess to explain Homer? Whom did I hear the other morning lecturing away so glibly on the nepenthe which Helen gave the Heroes, to fill them with the spirit of joy and love; how it was an allegory of the inward inspiration which flows from spiritual beauty, and all that? — Pretty enough, fair lady; but the question still remains, what was it? and I say it was this. Take it and try; and then confess, that while you can talk about Helen, I can act her, and know a little more about Homer than you do, after all."

"I cannot believe you! Give me some sign of your power, or how can I trust you?"

"A sign? — a sign? Kneel down then there, with your face toward the north; you are over tall for the poor old cripple!"

"I? I never knelt to human being."

"Then consider that you kneel to the handsome idol there, if you will — but kneel!"

And constrained by that glittering eye, Hypatia knelt before her.

"Have you faith! Have you desire? Will you submit? Will you obey? Self-will and pride see

nothing, know nothing. If you do not give up yourself, neither God nor devil will care to approach. Do you submit?"

"I do! I do!" cried poor Hypatia, in an agony of curiosity and self-distrust, while she felt her eye quailing and her limbs loosening more and more every moment under that intolerable fascination.

The old woman drew from her bosom a crystal, and placed the point against Hypatia's breast. A cold shiver ran through her. . . . . The witch waved her hands mysteriously round her head, muttering, from time to time, "Down! down, proud spirit!" and then placed the tips of her skinny fingers on the victim's forehead. Gradually her eyelids became heavy; again and again she tried to raise them, and dropped them again before those fixed glaring eyes . . . . and in another moment she lost consciousness. . . . .

When she awoke, she was kneeling in a distant part of the room, with dishevelled hair and garments. What was it so cold that she was clasping in her arms? The feet of the Apollo! The hag stood by her chuckling to herself and clapping her hands.

"How came I here? What have I been doing?"

"Saying such pretty things! — paying the fair youth there such compliments, as he will not be rude enough to forget in his visit to-night. A charming prophetic trance you have had! Ah, ha! you are not the only woman who is wiser asleep than awake! Well, you will make a very pretty Cassandra — or a Clytia, if you have the sense. . . . . It lies with you, my fair lady. Are you satisfied now? Will you have any more signs? Shall the old Jewess blast those blue

eyes blind to show that she knows more than the heathen?"

"Oh, I believe you — I believe," cried the poor exhausted maiden. "I will come; and yet —"

"Ah! yes! You had better settle first how he shall appear."

"As he wills! — let him only come! Only let me know that he is a god. Abamnon said that gods appeared in a clear, steady, unbearable light, amid a choir of all the lesser deities, archangels, principalities, and heroes, who derive their life from them."

"Abamnon was an old fool, then. Do you think young Phœbus ran after Daphne with such a mob at his heels? or that Jove, when he swam up to Leda, headed a whole Nile-flock of ducks, and plover, and curlews? No, he shall come alone — to you alone; and then you may choose for yourself between Cassandra and Clytia. . . . . Farewell. Do not forget your wafers, or the agate either, and talk with no one between now and sunset. And then — my pretty lady!"

And laughing to herself, the old hag glided from the room.

Hypatia sat trembling with shame and dread. She, as a disciple of the more purely spiritualistic school of Porphyry, had always looked with aversion, with all but contempt, on those theurgic arts which were so much lauded and employed by Iamblicus, Abamnon, and those who clung lovingly to the old priestly rites of Egypt and Chaldæa. They had seemed to her vulgar toys, tricks of legerdemain, suited only for the wonder of the mob. . . . She began to think of them with more favour now. How did she know that the

vulgar did not require signs and wonders to make them believe? . . . How, indeed? for did she not want such herself? And she opened Abamnon's famous letter to Porphyry, and read earnestly over, for the twentieth time, his subtle justification of magic, and felt it to be unanswerable. Magic? What was not magical? The whole universe, from the planets over her head to the meanest pebble at her feet, was utterly mysterious, ineffable, miraculous, influencing and influenced by affinities and repulsions as unexpected, as unfathomable, as those which, as Abamnon said, drew the gods towards those sounds, those objects, which, either in form, or colour, or chemical properties, were symbolic of, or akin to themselves. What wonder in it, after all? Was not love and hatred, sympathy and antipathy, the law of the universe? Philosophers, when they gave mechanical explanations of natural phenomena, came no nearer to the real solution of them. The mysterious "Why?" remained untouched. . . . . All their analyses could only darken with big words the plain fact that the water hated the oil with which it refused to mix, the lime loved the acid which it eagerly received into itself, and, like a lover, grew warm with the rapture of affection. Why not? What right had we to deny sensation, emotion, to them, any more than to ourselves? Was not the same universal spirit stirring in them as in us? And was it not by virtue of that spirit that we thought, and felt, and loved? — Then why not they, as well as we? If the one spirit permeated all things, if its all-energizing presence linked the flower with the crystal as well as with the demon and the god, must it not link together also the two extremes of the great chain of being?

bind even the nameless One itself to the smallest creature which bore its creative impress? What greater miracle in the attraction of a god or an angel, by material incense, symbols, and spells, than in the attraction of one soul to another by the material sounds of the human voice? Was the affinity between spirit and matter implied in that, more miraculous than the affinity between the soul and the body? — than the retention of that soul within that body by the breathing of material air, the eating of material food? Or even, if the physicists were right, and the soul were but a material product or energy of the nerves, and the sole law of the universe the laws of matter, then was not magic even more probable, more rational? Was it not fair by every analogy to suppose that there might be other, higher beings than ourselves, obedient to those laws, and therefore possible to be attracted, even as human beings were, by the baits of material sights and sounds? .... If spirit pervaded all things, then was magic probable; if nothing but matter had existence, magic was morally certain. All that remained in either case was the test of experience..... And had not that test been applied in every age, and asserted to succeed? What more rational, more philosophic, action than to try herself those methods and ceremonies which she was assured on every hand had never failed but through the ignorance or unfitness of the neophyte? .... Abamnon must be right..... She dared not think him wrong; for if this last hope failed, what was there left but to eat and drink, for to-morrow we die?

CHAPTER XI.

Miriam's Plot.

He who has worshipped a woman, even against his will and conscience, knows well how storm may follow storm, and earthquake earthquake, before his idol be utterly overthrown. And so Philammon found that evening, as he sat pondering over the strange chances of the day; for, as he pondered, his old feelings towards Hypatia began, in spite of the struggles of his conscience and reason, to revive within him. Not only pure love of her great loveliness, the righteous instinct which bids us welcome and honour beauty, whether in man or woman, as something of real worth — divine, heavenly, ay, though we know not how, in a most deep sense eternal; which makes our reason give the lie to all merely logical and sentimental maunderings of moralists about "the fleeting hues of this our painted clay;" telling men, as the old Hebrew Scriptures tell them, that physical beauty is the deepest of all spiritual symbols; and that though beauty without discretion be the jewel of gold in the swine's snout, yet the jewel of gold it is still, the sacrament of an inward beauty, which ought to be, perhaps hereafter may be, fulfilled in spirit and in truth. Not only this, which whispered to him — and who shall say that the whisper was of the earth, or of the lower world? — "She is too beau-

tiful to be utterly evil;" but the very defect in her creed which he had just discovered, drew him towards her again. She had no Gospel for the Magdalene, because she was a Pagan. . . . That, then, was the fault of her Paganism, not of herself. She had felt for Pelagia: but even if she had not, was not that, too, the fault of her Paganism? And for that Paganism who was to be blamed? She? . . . . Was he the man to affirm that? Had he not seen scandals, stupidities, brutalities, enough to shake even his faith, educated a Christian? How much more excuse for her, more delicate, more acute, more lofty than he; the child, too, of a heathen father? Her perfections, were they not her own? — her defects, those of her circumstances? . . . . And had she not welcomed him, guarded him, taught him, honoured him? . . . . Could he turn against her? — above all now in her distress — perhaps her danger? Was he not bound to her, if by nothing else, by gratitude? Was not he, of all men, bound to believe that all she required to make her perfect was conversion to the true faith? . . . . And then that first dream of converting her arose almost as bright as ever. . . . . And then he was checked by the thought of his first utter failure. . . . . At least, if he could not convert her, he could love her, pray for her. . . . . No, he could not even do that; for to whom could he pray? He had to repent, to be forgiven, to humble himself by penitence, perhaps for years, ere he could hope to be heard even for himself, much less for another. . . . . And so backwards and forwards swayed his hope and purpose, till he was roused from his meditation by the voice of the little porter, summoning him to his evening meal; and recollecting, for the first

time, that he had tasted no food that day, he went down, half-unwillingly, and ate.

But as he, the porter, and his negro wife were sitting silently and sadly enough together, Miriam came in, apparently in high goodhumour, and lingered a moment on her way to her own apartments up stairs.

"Eh? At supper? And nothing but lentils and water-melons, when the flesh-pots of Egypt have been famous any time these two thousand years. Ah! but times are changed since then! . . . You have worn out the old Hebrew hints, you miserable Gentiles you, and got a Cæsar instead of a Joseph! Hist, you hussies!" cried she to the girls up stairs, clapping her hands loudly. "Here! bring us down one of those roast chickens, and a bottle of the wine of wines — the wine with the green seal, you careless daughters of Midian, you, with your wits running on the men, I'll warrant, every minute I've been out of the house! Ah, you'll smart for it some day — you'll smart for it some day, you daughters of Adam's first wife!"

Down came, by the hands of one of the Syrian slave-girls, the fowl and the wine.

"There, now; we'll all sup together. Wine, that maketh glad the heart of man — youth, you were a monk once, so you have read all about that, eh? and about the best wine which goes down sweetly, causing the lips of them that are asleep to speak. And rare wine it was, I warrant, which the blessed Solomon had in his little country cellar up there in Lebanon. We'll try if this is not a very fair substitute for it, though. Come, my little man-monkey, drink and forget your sorrow! You shall be temple-sweeper to Beelzebub yet,

I promise you. Look at it there, creaming and curdling, the darling! purring like a cat at the very thought of touching human lips! As sweet as honey, as strong as fire, as clear as amber! Drink, ye children of Gehenna; and make good use of the little time that is left you between this and the unquenchable fire!"

And tossing a cup of it down her own throat, as if it had been water, she watched her companions with a meaning look, as they drank.

The little porter followed her example gallantly. Philammon looked, and longed, and sipped blushingly and bashfully, and tried to fancy that he did not care for it; and sipped again, being willing enough to forget his sorrow also for a moment; the negress refused with fear and trembling — "She had a vow on her."

"Satan possess you and your vow! Drink, you coal out of Tophet! Do you think it is poisoned? You, the only creature in the world that I should not enjoy ill-using, because every one else ill-uses you already without my help! Drink, I say, or I'll turn you pea-green from head to foot!"

The negress put the cup to her lips, and contrived, for her own reasons, to spill the contents unobserved.

"A very fine lecture that of the Lady Hypatia's the other morning, on Helen's nepenthe," quoth the little porter, growing philosophic as the wine-fumes rose. "Such a power of extracting the cold water of philosophy out of the bottomless pit of Mythus, I never did hear. Did you ever, my Philammonidion?"

"Aha? she and I were talking about that half-an-hour ago," said Miriam.

"What! have you seen her?" asked Philammon, with a flutter of the heart.

"If you mean, did she mention you, -- why, then, yes!"

"How? — how?"

"Talked of a young Phœbus Apollo — without mentioning names, certainly, but in the most sensible, and practical, and hopeful way — the wisest speech that I have heard from her this twelvemonth."

Philammon blushed scarlet.

"And that," thought he, "in spite of what passed this morning! — Why, what is the matter with our host?"

"He has taken Solomon's advice, and forgotten his sorrow."

And so, indeed, he had; for he was sleeping sweetly, with open lacklustre eyes, and a maudlin smile at the ceiling; while the negress, with her head fallen on her chest, seemed equally unconscious of their presence.

"We'll see," quoth Miriam; and taking up the lamp, she held the flame unceremoniously to the arm of each of them: but neither winced or stirred.

"Surely, your wine is not drugged?" said Philammon, in trepidation.

"Why not? What has made them beasts may make us angels. You seem none the less lively for it! Do I?"

"But drugged wine?"

"Why not? The same who made wine made poppy-juice. Both will make man happy. Why not use both?"

"It is poison!"

"It is the nepenthe, as I told Hypatia, whereof she was twaddling mysticism this morning. Drink, child,

drink! I have no mind to put you to sleep to-night! I want to make a man of you, or rather, to see whether you are one!"

And she drained another cup, and then went on, half talking to herself, —

"Ay, it is poison; and music is poison; and woman is poison, according to the new creed, Pagan and Christian; and wine will be poison, and meat will be poison, some day; and we shall have a world full of mad Nebuchadnezzars, eating grass like oxen. It is poisonous, and brutal, and devilish, to be a man, and not a monk, and an eunuch, and a dry branch. You are all in the same lie, Christians and philosophers, Cyril and Hypatia! Don't interrupt me, but drink, young fool! —— Ay, and the only man who keeps his manhood, the only man who is not ashamed to be what God has made him, is your Jew. You will find yourselves in want of him after all, some day, you besotted Gentiles, to bring you back to common sense and common manhood. — In want of him and his grand old books, which you despise while you make idols of them, about Abraham, and Jacob, and Moses, and David, and Solomon, whom you call saints, you miserable hypocrites, though they did what you are too dainty to do, and had their wives and their children, and thanked God for a beautiful woman, as Adam did before them, and their sons do after them — Drink, I say! — and believed that God had really made the world, and not the devil, and had given them the lordship over it, as you will find out to your cost some day!"

Philammon heard, and could not answer; and on she rambled.

"And music, too? Our priests were not afraid of sackbut and psaltery, dulcimer and trumpet, in the house of the Lord; for they knew who had given them the cunning to make them. Our prophets were not afraid of calling for music, when they wished to prophesy, and letting it soften and raise their souls, and open and quicken them till they saw into the inner harmony of things, and beheld the future in the present; for they knew who made the melody and harmony, and made them the outward symbols of the inward song which runs through sun and stars, storm and tempest, fulfilling His word — in that these sham philosophers the heathen are wiser than those Christian monks. Try it! — try it! Come with me! Leave these sleepers here, and come to my rooms. You long to be as wise as Solomon. Then get at wisdom as Solomon did, and give your heart first to know folly and madness. . . . . You have read the Book of the Preacher?"

Poor Philammon! He was no longer master of himself. The arguments — the wine — the terrible spell of the old woman's voice and eye, and the strong overpowering will which showed out through them, dragged him along in spite of himself. As if in a dream, he followed her up the stairs.

"There, throw away that stupid, ugly, shapeless, philosopher's cloak. So! You have on the white tunic I gave you? And now you look as a human being should. And you have been to the baths to-day? Well — you have the comfort of feeling now like other people, and having that alabaster skin as white as it was created, instead of being tanned like a brute's hide. Drink, I say! Ay — what was that face, that

figure made for? Bring a mirror here, hussy! There, look in that, and judge for yourself! Were those ripe lips rounded for nothing? Why were those eyes set in your head, and made to sparkle bright as jewels, sweet as mountain honey? Why were those curls laid ready for soft fingers to twine themselves among them, and look all the whiter among the glossy black knots? Judge for yourself!"

Alas! poor Philammon!

"And after all," thought he, "is it not true, as well as pleasant?"

"Sing to the poor boy, girls! — sing to him! and teach him for the first time in his little ignorant life, the old road to inspiration!"

One of the slave-girls sat down on the divan, and took up a double flute; while the other rose, and accompanying the plaintive dreamy air with a slow dance, and delicate tinklings of her silver armlets and anklets, and the sistrum which she held aloft, she floated gracefully round and round the floor, and sang —

Why were we born, but for bliss?
Why are we ripe, but to fall?
Dream not that duty can bar thee from beauty,
Like water and sunshine, the heir-loom of all.

Lips were made only to kiss;
Hands were made only to toy;
Eyes were made only to lure on the lonely,
The longing, the loving, and drown them in joy!

Alas, for poor Philammon! And yet no! The very poison brought with it its own antidote; and, shaking off by one strong effort of will the spell of the music and the wine, he sprang to his feet. . . . .

"Never! If love means no more than that — if it is to be a mere delicate self-indulgence, worse than the

brute's, because it requires the prostration of nobler faculties, and a selfishness the more huge in proportion to the greatness of the soul which is crushed inward by it — then I will have none of it! I have had my dream — yes! but it was of one who should be at once my teacher and my pupil, my debtor and my queen — who should lean on me, and yet support me — supply my defects, although with lesser light, as the old moon fills up the circle of the new — labour with me side by side in some great work — rising with me for ever as I rose: — and this is the base substitute! Never!"

Whether or not this was unconsciously forced into words by the vehemence of his passion, or whether the old Jewess heard, or pretended to hear, a foot-step coming up the stair, she at all events sprang instantly to her feet.

"Hist! Silence, girls! I hear a visitor. What mad maiden has come to beg a love-charm of the poor old witch at this time of night? Or have the Christian bloodhounds tracked the old lioness of Judah to her den at last? We'll see!"

And she drew a dagger from her girdle, and stepped boldly to the door.

As she went out she turned —

"So! my brave young Apollo! You do not admire simple woman? You must have something more learned and intellectual, and spiritual, and so forth. I wonder whether Eve, when she came to Adam in the garden, brought with her a certificate of proficiency in the seven sciences? Well, well — like must after like. Perhaps we shall be able to suit you after all. Vanish, daughters of Midian!"

The girls vanished accordingly, whispering and laughing; and Philammon found himself alone. Although he was somewhat soothed by the old woman's last speech, yet a sense of terror, of danger, of coming temptation, kept him standing sternly on his feet, looking warily round the chamber, lest a fresh siren should emerge from behind some curtain or heap of pillows.

On one side of the room he perceived a doorway, filled by a curtain of gauze, from behind which came the sound of whispering voices. His fear, growing with the general excitement of his mind, rose into anger as he began to suspect some snare; and he faced round towards the curtain, and stood like a wild beast at bay, ready, with uplifted arm, for all evil spirits, male or female.

"And he will show himself? How shall I accost him?" whispered a well-known voice — could it be Hypatia's? And then the guttural Hebrew accent of the old woman answered —

"As you spoke of him this morning —"

"Oh! I will tell him all, and he must — he must have mercy! But he? — so awful, so glorious!" - -

What the answer was, he could not hear: but the next moment a sweet heavy scent, as of narcotic gums, filled the room — mutterings of incantations — and then a blaze of light, in which the curtain vanished, and disclosed to his astonished eyes, enveloped in a glory of luminous smoke, the hag standing by a tripod, and, kneeling by her, Hypatia herself, robed in pure white, glittering with diamonds and gold, her lips parted, her head thrown back, her arms stretched out in an agony of expectation.

In an instant, before he had time to stir, she had sprung through the blaze, and was kneeling at his feet.

"Phœbus! beautiful, glorious, ever young! Hear me! only a moment! only this once!"

Her drapery had caught fire from the tripod, but she did not heed it. Philammon instinctively clasped her in his arms, and crushed it out, as she cried —

"Have mercy on me! Tell me the secret! I will obey thee! I have no self — I am thy slave! Kill me, if thou wilt: but speak!"

The blaze sank into a soft, warm, mellow gleam, and beyond it what appeared?

The negro-woman, with one finger upon her lips, as, with an imploring, all but despairing, look, she held up to him her little crucifix.

He saw it. What thoughts flashed through him, like the lightning bolt, at that blessed sign of infinite self-sacrifice, I say not; let those who know it judge for themselves. But in another instant he had spurned from him the poor deluded maiden, whose idolatrous ecstasies he saw instantly were not meant for himself, and rushed desperately across the room, looking for an outlet.

He found a door in the darkness — a room — a window — and in another moment he had leapt twenty feet into the street, rolled over, bruised and bleeding, rose again like an Antæus, with new strength, and darted off towards the archbishop's house.

And poor Hypatia lay half senseless on the floor, with the Jewess watching her bitter tears — not merely of disappointment, but of utter shame. For as Philammon fled she had recognised those well

nown features; and the veil was lifted from her eyes, nd the hope and the self-respect of Theon's daughter ere gone for ever.

Her righteous wrath was too deep for upbraidings. lowly she rose; returned into the inner room; rapped her cloak deliberately around her; and went lently away, with one look at the Jewess of solemn orn and defiance.

"Ah! I can afford a few sulky looks to-night!" aid the old woman to herself, with a smile, as she icked up from the floor the prize for which she had een plotting so long — Raphael's half of the black gate.

"I wonder whether she will miss it! Perhaps she ill have no fancy for its company any longer, now hat she has discovered what over-palpable archangels ppear when she rubs it. But if she does try to ecover it . . . . why — let her try her strength with ine: — or, rather, with a Christian mob."

And then, drawing from her bosom the other half f the talisman, she fitted the two pieces together gain and again, fingering them over, and poring upon hem with tear-brimming eyes, till she had satisfied erself that the fracture still fitted exactly; while she nurmured to herself from time to time — "Oh, that e were here! Oh, that he would return now — now! t may be too late to-morrow! Stay — I will go and onsult the teraph; it may know where he is." . . . .

And she departed to her incantations; while Hyatia threw herself upon her bed at home, and filled he chamber with a long, low wailing, as of a child n pain, until the dreary dawn broke on her shame nd her despair. And then she rose, and rousing her-

self for one great effort, calmly prepared a last oration, in which she intended to bid farewell for ever to Alexandria and to the schools.

Philammon meanwhile was striding desperately up the main street which led towards the Serapeium. But he was not destined to arrive there as soon as he had hoped to do. For ere he had gone half a mile, behold a crowd advancing towards him, blocking up the whole street.

The mass seemed endless. Thousands of torches flared above their heads, and from the heart of the procession rose a solemn chant, in which Philammon soon recognised a well-known Catholic hymn. He was half-minded to turn up some by street, and escape meeting them. But on attempting to do so, he found every avenue which he tried similarly blocked up by a tributary stream of people; and, almost ere he was aware, was entangled in the vanguard of the great column.

"Let me pass!" cried he, in a voice of entreaty.

"Pass, thou heathen?"

In vain he protested his Christianity.

"Origenist, Donatist, heretic! Whither should a good Catholic be going to-night, save to the Cæsareium?"

"My friends, my friends, I have no business at the Cæsareium!" cried he, in utter despair. "I am on my way to seek a private interview with the patriarch, on matters of importance."

"Oh, liar! who pretends to be known to the patriarch, and yet is ignorant that this night he visits at the Cæsareium the most sacred corpse of the martyr Ammonius!'

"What! Is Cyril with you?"

"He and all his clergy."

"Better so; better in public," said Philammon to himself; and, turning, he joined the crowd.

Onward, with chant and dirge, they swept out through the Sun-gate, upon the harbour-esplanade, and wheeled to the right along the quay, while the torch-light bathed in a red glare the great front of the Cæsareium, and the tall obelisks before it, and the masts of the thousand ships which lay in the harbour on their left; and last, but not least, before the huge dim mass of the palace which bounded the esplanade in front, a long line of glittering helmets and cuirasses, behind a barrier of cables, which stretched from the shore to the corner of the museum.

There was a sudden halt; a low ominous growl; and then the mob pressed onward from behind, surged up almost to the barrier. The soldiers dropped the points of their lances, and stood firm. Again the mob recoiled; again surged forward. Fierce cries arose; some of the boldest stooped to pick up stones: but, luckily, the pavement was too firm for them. . . . Another moment, and the whole soldiery of Alexandria would have been fighting for life and death against fifty thousand Christians. . . . .

But Cyril had not forgotten his generalship. Reckless as that night's events proved him to be about arousing the passions of his subjects, he was yet far too wary to risk the odium and the danger of a night attack, which even if successful, would have cost the lives of hundreds. He knew well enough the numbers and the courage of the enemy, and the certainty that, in case of a collision, no quarter would be given or

accepted on either side. . . . Beside, if a battle must take place — and that, of course, must happen sooner or later — it must not happen in his presence and under his sanction. He was in the right now, and Orestes in the wrong; and in the right he would keep — at least till his express to Byzantium should have returned, and Orestes was either proscribed or superseded. So looking forward to some such chance as this, the wary prelate had schooled his aide-de-camps, the deacons of the city, and went on his way up the steps of the Cæsareium, knowing that they could be trusted to keep the peace outside.

And they did their work well. Before a blow had been struck, or even an insult passed on either side, they had burst through the front rank of the mob, and by stout threats of excommunication, enjoined not only peace, but absolute silence until the sacred ceremony which was about to take place should be completed; and enforced their commands by marching up and down like sentries between the hostile ranks for the next weary two hours, till the very soldiers broke out into expressions of admiration, and the tribune of the cohort, who had no great objection, but also no great wish, to fight, paid them a high-flown compliment on their laudable endeavours to maintain public order, and received the somewhat ambiguous reply, that the "weapons of their warfare were not carnal, that they wrestled not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers" . . . an answer which the tribune, being now somewhat sleepy, thought it best to leave unexplained.

In the mean while, there had passed up the steps of the Temple a gorgeous line of priests, among whom

glittered, more gorgeous than all, the stately figure of the pontiff. They were followed close by thousands of monks, not only from Alexandria and Nitria, but from all the adjoining towns and monasteries. And as Philammon, unable for some half hour more to force his way into the church, watched their endless stream, he could well believe the boast which he had so often heard in Alexandria, that one half of the population of Egypt was at that moment in "religious orders."

After the monks, the laity began to enter: but even then so vast was the crowd, and so dense the crush upon the steps, that before he could force his way into the church, Cyril's sermon had begun.

* * * *

— "What went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Nay, such are in king's palaces, and in the palaces of prefects who would needs be emperors, and cast away the Lord's bonds from them, — of whom it is written, that He that sitteth in the heavens laugheth them to scorn, and taketh the wicked in their own snare, and maketh the devices of princes of none effect. Ay, in kings' palaces, and in theatres too, where the rich of this world, poor in faith, deny their covenant, and defile their baptismal robes that they may do honour to the devourers of the earth. Woe to them who think that they may partake of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils! Woe to them who will praise with the same mouth Aphrodite the fiend, and her of whom it is written that He was born of a pure Virgin. Let such be excommunicate from the cup of the Lord, and from the congregation of the Lord, till they have purged away their sins by

penance and by almsgiving. But for you, ye p
this world, rich in faith, you whom the rich d
hale before the judgment seats, and blasphem
holy name whereby ye are called — what we
out into the wilderness to see? A prophet? –
and more than a prophet — a martyr! More t
prophet, more than a king, more than a prefect:
theatre was the sands of the desert, whose thron
the cross, whose crown was bestowed, not by h
philosophers and daughters of Satan, deceiving
with the works of their fathers, but by angel
archangels; a crown of glory, the victor's laurel,
grows for ever in the paradise of the highest h
Call him no more Ammonius, call him Thaun
wonderful! Wonderful in his poverty, wonder
his zeal, wonderful in his faith, wonderful
fortitude, wonderful in his death, most wonder
the manner of that death. Oh, thrice blessed, wh
merited the honour of the cross itself! Wha
follow, but that one so honoured in the flesh
also be honoured in the life which he now lives
that from the virtue of these thrice-holy limb
leper should be cleansed, the dumb should speak
very dead be raised? Yes; it were impiety to
it. Consecrated by the cross, this flesh shall no
rest in hope, but work in power. Approach, a
healed! Approach, and see the glory of the
the glory of the poor! Approach, and learn tha
which man despises, God hath highly esteemed
that which man rejects, God accepts; that that
man punishes, God rewards. Approach, and see
God hath chosen the foolish things of this wo
confound the wise, and the weak things of this

o confound the strong. Man abhors the cross: The ion of God condescended to endure it! Man tramples n the poor: The Son of God hath not where to lay is head. Man passes by the sick as useless: The ion of God chooses them to be partakers of his suffer- ngs, that the glory of God may be made manifest in hem. Man curses the publican, while he employs him o fill his coffers with the plunder of the poor: The ion of God calls him from the receipt of custom to be n apostle, higher than the kings of the earth. Man asts away the harlot like a faded flower, when he has empted her to become the slave of sin for a season: nd The Son of God calls her, the defiled, the lespised, the forsaken, to Himself, accepts her tears, lesses her offering, and declares that her sins are for- iven, for she hath loved much: while to whom little s forgiven the same loveth little." . . . .

Philammon heard no more. With the passionate nd impulsive nature of a Greek fanatic, he burst orward through the crowd, toward the steps which ed to the choir, and above which, in front of the ltar, stood the corpse of Ammonius enclosed in a offin of glass, beneath a gorgeous canopy; and ever stopping till he found himself in front of Cyril's ulpit, he threw himself upon his face upon the pave- nent, spread out his arms in the form of a cross, nd lay silent and motionless before the feet of the nultitude.

There was a sudden whisper and rustle in the ongregation: but Cyril, after a moment's pause, went n —

"Man, in his pride and self-sufficiency, despises umiliation, and penance, and the broken and the

contrite heart; and tells thee that only as long as thou doest well unto thyself will he speak well of thee: The Son of God says that he that humbleth himself, even as this our penitent brother, he it is who shall be exalted. He it is of whom it is written that his father saw him afar off, and ran to meet him, and bade put the best robe on him, and a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and make merry and be glad with the choir of angels who rejoice over one sinner that repenteth. Arise, my son, whosoever thou art; and go in peace for this night, remembering that he who said 'My belly cleaveth unto the pavement,' hath said also, 'Rejoice not against me, Satan, mine enemy, for when I fall I shall arise!'"

A thunderclap of applause, surely as pardonable as any an Alexandrian church ever heard, followed this dexterous, and yet most righteous, turn of the patriarch's oratory: but Philammon raised himself slowly and fearfully to his knees, and blushing scarlet, endured the gaze of ten thousand eyes.

Suddenly, from beside the pulpit, an old man sprang forward, and clasped him round the neck. It was Arsenius.

"My son! my son!" sobbed he, almost aloud.

"Slave, as well as son, if you will!" whispered Philammon. "One boon from the patriarch; and then home to the Laura for ever!" . . .

"Oh, twice-blest night," rolled on above the deep rich voice of Cyril, "which beholds at once the coronation of a martyr, and the conversion of a sinner; which increases at the same time the ranks of the church triumphant, and of the church militant; and

ierces celestial essences with a twofold rapture of hanksgiving, as they welcome on high a victorious, nd on earth a repentant, brother!"

And at a sign from Cyril, Peter the Reader stepped orward, and led away, gently enough, the two weep- rs, who were welcomed as they passed by the bless- ngs, and prayers, and tears even of those fierce anatics of Nitria. Nay, Peter himself, as he turned to ave them together in the sacristy, held out his hand o Philammon.

"I ask your forgiveness," said the poor boy, who lunged eagerly and with a sort of delight into any nd every-self-abasement.

"And I accord it," quoth Peter; and returned to he church, looking, and probably feeling, in a far ore pleasant mood than usual.

CHAPTER XII.

The Prodigal's Return.

About ten o'clock the next morning, as Hypatia, worn out with sleepless sorrow, was trying to arrange her thoughts for the farewell lecture, her favourite maid announced that a messenger from Synesius waited below. A letter from Synesius? A gleam of hope flashed across her mind. From him, surely, might come something of comfort, of advice. Ah! if he only knew how sorely she was bested!

"Let him send up his letter."

"He refuses to deliver it to any one but yourself. And I think," — added the damsel, who had, to tell the truth, at that moment in her purse a substantial reason for so thinking — "I think it might be worth your ladyship's while to see him."

Hypatia shook her head impatiently.

"He seems to know you well, madam, though he refuses to tell his name: but he bade me put you in mind of a black agate — I cannot tell what he meant — of a black agate, and a spirit which was to appear when you rubbed it."

Hypatia turned pale as death. Was it Philammon again? She felt for the talisman — it was gone? She must have lost it last night in Miriam's chamber. Now she saw the true purpose of the old hag's plot —

. . . deceived, tricked, doubly tricked! And what new plot was this?

"Tell him to leave the letter, and begone. . . . . My father? What? Who is this? Whom are you bringing to me at such a moment?"

And as she spoke, Theon ushered into the chamber no other than Raphael Aben-Ezra, and then retired.

He advanced slowly towards her, and falling on one knee, placed in her hand Synesius's letter.

Hypatia trembled from head to foot at the unexpected apparition. . . . . Well; at least he could know nothing of last night and its disgrace. But not daring to look him in the face, she took the letter, and opened it. . . . . If she had hoped for comfort from it, her hope was not realized.

"Synesius to the Philosopher:

"Even if fortune cannot take from me all things, yet what she can take she will. And yet of two things, at least, she shall not rob me — to prefer that which is best, and to succour the oppressed. Heaven forbid that she should overpower my judgment, as well as the rest of me! Therefore I do hate injustice; for what I can do; and my will is to stop it; but the power to do so is among the things of which she has bereaved me — before, too, she bereaved me of my children. . . .

'Once, in old times, Milesian men were strong.'

And there was a time when I, too, was a comfort to my friend, and when you used to call me a blessing to every one except myself, as I squandered for the benefit of others the favour with which the great regarded me. . . . . My hands they were — then.

. . . . But now I am left desolate of all: unless you have any power. For you and virtue I count among those good things, of which none can deprive me. But you always have power, and will have it, surely, now — using it as nobly as you do.

"As for Nicæus and Philolaus, two noble youths, and kinsmen of my own, let it be the business of all who honour you, both private men and magistrates, to see that they return possessors of their just rights."

"Of all who honour me!" said she, with a bitter sigh: and then looked up quickly at Raphael, as if fearful of having betrayed herself. She turned deadly pale. In his eyes was a look of solemn pity, which told her that he knew — not all? — surely not all?

"Have you seen the — Miriam?" gasped she, rushing desperately at that which she most dreaded.

"Not yet. I arrived but one hour ago; and Hypatia's welfare is still more important to me than my own."

"My welfare? It is gone!"

"So much the better. I never found mine till I lost it."

"What do you mean?"

Raphael lingered, yet without withdrawing his gaze, as if he had something of importance to say which he longed and yet feared to utter. At last —

"At least, you will confess that I am better dress than when we met last. I have returned, you see, like a certain demoniac of Gadara, about whom we used to argue, clothed — and perhaps also in my right mind. . . . God knows!"

"Raphael! are you come here to mock me? You know — you cannot have been here an hour without

knowing — that but yesterday I dreamed of being" — and she dropped her eyes — "an empress; that to-day I am ruined; to-morrow, perhaps, proscribed. Have you no speech for me but your old sarcasms and ambiguities?"

Raphael stood silent and motionless.

"Why do you not speak? What is the meaning of this sad, earnest look, so different from your former self? . . . You have something strange to tell me!"

"I have," said he, speaking very slowly. "What — what would Hypatia answer if, after all, Aben-Ezra said, like the dying Julian, 'The Galilæan has conquered?'"

"Julian never said it! It is a monkish calumny."

"But I say it."

"Impossible!"

"I say it!"

"As your dying speech? The true Raphael Aben-Ezra, then, lives no more!"

"But he may be born again."

"And die to philosophy, that he may be born again into barbaric superstition! Oh worthy metempsychosis! Farewell, sir!" And she rose to go.

"Hear me! — hear me patiently this once, noble, beloved Hypatia! One more sneer of yours, and I may become again the same case-hardened fiend which you knew me of old — to all, at least, but you. Oh, do not think me ungrateful, forgetful! What do I not owe to you, whose pure and lofty words alone kept smouldering in me the dim remembrance that there was a Right, a Truth, an unseen world of spirits, after whose pattern man should aspire to live?"

She paused, and listened in wonder. What faith had she of her own? She would at least hear what he had found. . . .

"Hypatia, I am older than you — wiser than you, if wisdom be the fruit of the tree of knowledge. You know but one side of the medal, Hypatia, and the fairer; I have seen its reverse as well as its obverse. Through every form of human thought, of human action, of human sin and folly, have I been wandering for years, and found no rest — as little in wisdom as in folly, in spiritualist dreams as in sensual brutality. I could not rest in your Platonism — I will tell you why hereafter. I went on to Stoicism, Epicurism, Cynicism, Scepticism, and in that lowest deep I found a lower depth, when I became sceptical of Scepticism itself."

"There is a lower deep still," thought Hypatia to herself, as she recollected last night's magic; but she did not speak.

"Then, in utter abasement, I confessed myself lower than the brutes, who had a law, and obeyed it, while I was my own lawless God, devil, harpy, whirlwind. . . . I needed even my own dog to awaken in me the brute consciousness of my own existence, or of anything without myself. I took her, the dog, for my teacher, and obeyed her, for she was wiser than I. And she led me back — the poor dumb beast — like a God-sent and God-obeying angel, to human nature, to mercy, to self-sacrifice, to belief, to worship — to pure and wedded love."

Hypatia started. . . . And in the struggle to hide her own bewilderment, answered almost without knowing it —

"Wedded love? . . . Wedded love? Is that, then, the paltry bait by which Raphael Aben-Ezra has been tempted to desert philosophy?"

"Thank Heaven!" said Raphael to himself. "She does not care for me, then! If she had, pride would have kept her from that sneer." "Yes, my dear lady," answered he, aloud, "to desert philosophy, the search after wisdom; because wisdom itself had sought for me, and found me. But, indeed, I had hoped that you would have approved of my following your example for once in my life, and resolving, like you, to enter into the estate of wedlock."

"Do not sneer at me!" cried she, in her turn, looking up at him with shame and horror, which made him repent of uttering the words. "If you do not know — you will soon, too soon! Never mention that hateful dream to me, if you wish to have speech of me more!"

A pang of remorse shot through Raphael's heart. Who but he himself had plotted that evil marriage? But she gave him no opportunity of answering her, and went on hurriedly —

"Speak to me rather about yourself. What is this strange and sudden betrothal? What has it to do with Christianity? I had thought that it was rather by the glories of celibacy — gross and supperstitious as their notions of it are — that the Galilæans tempted their converts."

"So had I, my dearest lady," answered he, as, glad to turn the subject for a moment, and perhaps a little nettled by her contemptuous tone, he resumed something of his old arch and careless manner. "But — there is no accounting for man's agreeable inconsist-

'encies — one morning I found myself, to my astonishment, seized by two bishops, and betrothed, whether I chose or not, to a young lady who but a few days before had been destined for a nunnery."

"Two bishops?"

"I speak simple truth. The one was Synesius, of course; — that most incoherent and most benevolent of busybodies chose to betray me behind my back; — but I will not trouble you with that part of my story. The real wonder is, that the other episcopal matchmaker was — Augustine of Hippo himself!

"Anything to bribe a convert," said Hypatia, contemptuously.

"I assure you, no. He informed me, and her also, openly and uncivilly enough, that he thought us very much to be pitied for so great a fall. . . . . But as we neither of us seemed to have any call for the higher life of celibacy, he could not press it on us. . . . . We should have trouble in the flesh. But if we married we had not sinned. To which I answered that my humility was quite content to sit in the very lowest ranks, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. . . . He replied by an encomium on virginity, in which I seemed to hear again the voice of Hypatia herself."

"And sneered at it inwardly, as you used to sneer at me."

"Really, I was in no sneering mood at that moment; and whatsoever I may have felt inclined to reply, he was kind enough to say for me and himself the next minute."

"What do you mean?"

"He went on, to my utter astonishment, by such an eulogium on wedlock as I never heard from Jew

or heathen, and ended by advice to young married folk so thoroughly excellent and to the point, that I could not help telling him, when he stopped, what a pity I thought it that he had not himself married, and made some good woman happy by putting his own recipes into practice. . . . . And at that, Hypatia, I saw an expression on his face which made me wish for the moment that I had bitten out this impudent tongue of mine, before I so rashly touched some deep old wound. . . . . That man has wept bitter tears ere now, be sure of it. . . . . But he turned the conversation instantly, like a well-bred gentleman as he is, by saying, with the sweetest smile, that though he had made it a solemn rule never to be a party to making up any marriage, yet in our case Heaven had so plainly pointed us out for each other, &c. &c., that he could not refuse himself the pleasure. . . . . and ended by a blessing as kindly as ever came from the lips of man."

"You seem wonderfully taken with the sophist of Hippo," said Hypatia, impatiently; "and forget, perhaps, that his opinions, especially when, as you confess, they are utterly inconsistent with themselves, are not quite as important to me as they seem to have become to you."

"Whether he be consistent or not about marriage," said Raphael, somewhat proudly, "I care little. I went to him to tell me, not about the relation of the sexes, on which point I am probably as good a judge as he — but about God; and on that subject he told me enough to bring me back to Alexandria, that I might undo, if possible, somewhat of the wrong which I have done to Hypatia."

"What wrong have you done me? .... You are silent? Be sure, at least, that whatsoever it may be, you will not wipe it out by trying to make a proselyte of me!"

"Be not too sure of that. I have found too great a treasure not to wish to share it with Theon's daughter."

"A treasure?" said she, half scornfully.

"Yes, indeed. You recollect my last words, when we parted there below a few months ago?"

Hypatia was silent. One terrible possibility at which he had hinted flashed across her memory for the first time since; . . . but she spurned proudly from her the heaven-sent warning.

"I told you that, like Diogenes, I went forth to seek a man. Did I not promise you, that when I had found one you should be the first to hear of him? And I have found a man."

Hypatia waved her beautiful hand. "I know whom you would say . . . that crucified one. Be it so. I want not a man, but a god."

"What sort of a god, Hypatia? A god made up of our own intellectual notions, or rather of negations of them — of infinity, and eternity, and invisibility, and impassibility — and why not of immorality, too, Hypatia? For I recollect we used to agree that it was a carnal degrading of the Supreme One to predicate of him so merely human a thing as virtue."

Hypatia was silent.

"Now I have always had a sort of fancy that what we wanted, as the first predicate of our Absolute One, was that He was to be not merely an infinite God — whatever that meant, which I suspect we did not

always see quite clearly — or an eternal one — or an omnipotent one — or even merely a one God at all; — none of which predicates, I fear, did we understand more clearly than the first: but that He must be a righteous God: — or rather, as we used sometimes to say that He was to have no predicate — Righteousness itself. And all along, I could not help remembering that my old sacred Hebrew books told me of such a one; and feeling that they might have something to tell me which —"

"Which I did not tell you! And this, then, caused your air of reserve, and of sly superiority over the woman whom you mocked by calling her your pupil! I little suspected you of so truly Jewish a jealousy! Why, oh why, did you not tell me this?"

"Because I was a beast, Hypatia; and had all but forgotten what this righteousness was like; and was afraid to find out, lest it should condemn me. Because I was a devil, Hypatia; and hated righteousness, and neither wished to see you righteous, or God righteous either, because then you would both have been unlike myself. God be merciful to me a sinner!"

She looked up in his face. The man was changed as if by miracle — and yet not changed. There was the same gallant consciousness of power, the same subtle and humorous twinkle in those strong ripe Jewish features and those glittering eyes: and yet every line in his face was softened, sweetened; the mask of sneering faineance was gone — imploring tenderness and earnestness beamed from his whole countenance. The chrysalis case had fallen off, and disclosed the butterfly within. She sat looking at him,

and past her hand across her eyes, as if to try whether the apparition would not vanish. He, the subtle! — he, the mocker! — he, the Lucian of Alexandria! — he, whose depth and power had awed her, even in his most polluted days. . . . And this was the end of him. . . .

"It is a freak of cowardly superstition. . . . Those Christians have been frightening him about his sins and their Tartarus."

She looked again into his bright, clear, fearless face, and was ashamed of her own calumny. And this was the end of him — of Synesius — of Augustine — of learned and unlearned, Goth and Roman. . . . . The great flood would have its way, then. . . . . Could she alone fight against it?

She would! Would she submit? — She? Her will should stand firm, her reason free, to the last — to the death if need be. . . . . And yet last night! — last night!

At last she spoke, without looking up.

"And what if you have found a man in that crucified one? Have you found in him a God also?"

"Does Hypatia recollect Glaucon's definition of the perfectly righteous man? . . . . How, without being guilty of one unrighteous act, he must labour his life-long under the imputation of being utterly unrighteous, in order that his disinterestedness may be thoroughly tested, and by proceeding in such a course, arrive inevitably, as Glaucon says, not only in Athens of old, or in Judæa of old, but, as you yourself will agree, in Christian Alexandria at this moment, at — do you remember, Hypatia? — bonds, and the scourge, and lastly, at the cross itself. . . . . If Plato's idea of the

righteous man be a crucified one, why may not mine also? If as we both — and old Bishop Clemens, too — as good a Platonist as we, remember — and Augustine himself, would agree, Plato in speaking those strange words, spoke not of himself, but by The Spirit of God, why should not others have spoken by the same Spirit when they spoke the same words?"

"A crucified man .... Yes. But a crucified God, Raphael! I shudder at the blasphemy."

"So do my poor dear fellow-countrymen. Are they the more righteous in their daily doings, Hypatia, on account of their fancied reverence for the glory of One who probably knows best how to preserve and manifest His own glory? But you assent to the definition? Take care!" said he, with one of his arch smiles, "I have been fighting with Augustine, and have become of late a terrible dialectician. Do you assent to it?"

"Of course — it is Plato's."

"But do you assent merely because it is written in the book called Plato's, or because your reason tells you that it is true? .... You will not tell me. Tell me this, then, at least. Is not the perfectly righteous man the highest specimen of men?"

"Surely," said she, half carelessly: but not unwilling, like a philosopher and a Greek, as a matter of course, to embark in anything like a word-battle and to shut out sadder thoughts for a moment.

"Then must not the Autanthropos, the archetypal and ideal man, who is more perfect than any individual specimen, be perfectly righteous also?"

"Yes."

"Suppose, then, for the sake of one of those pleasant old games of ours, an argument, that he wished

to manifest his righteousness to the world. . . . . The only method for him, according to Plato, would be [illegible] of calumny and persecution, the scourge and [illegible] the cross.'

"What words are these, Raphael? Material scourges and crosses for an eternal and spiritual idea?"

"Did you ever try, Hypatia, consider at leisure what the archetype of man might be like?"

Hypatia started, as at a new thought, and confessed — as every Neo-Platonist would have done — that she had never done so.

"And yet our master, Plato, bade us believe that there was a subsecular archetype of each thing, from a flower to a man, eternal in the heavens. Perhaps we have not been faithful Platonists enough heretofore, my dearest man. Perhaps, being philosophers, and somewhat of Pharisees in both, we began all our lucubrations as we did our prayers, by thanking God that we were not as other men were; and so misread another passage in the Republic, which we used in pleasant old days to be fond of quoting."

"What was that?" asked Hypatia, who became more and more interested every moment.

"That philosophers were men."

"Are you mocking me? Plato defines the philosopher as the man who seeks after the objects of knowledge, while others seek after those of opinion."

"And most truly. But what if, in our eagerness to assert that wherein the philosopher differed from other men, we had overlooked that in which he resembled other men; and so forgot that, after all, man was a genus whereof the philosopher was only a species?"

Hypatia sighed.

"Do you not think, then, that as the greater contains the less, and the archetype of the genus that of the species, we should have been wiser if we had speculated a little more on the archetype of man as man, before we meddled with a part of that archetype, — the archetype of the philosopher? .... Certainly it would have been the easier course, for there are more men than philosophers, Hypatia; and every man is a real man, and a fair subject for examination, while every philosopher is not a real philosopher — our friends the Academics, for instance, and even a Neoplatonist or two whom we know? You seem impatient. Shall I cease?"

"You mistook the cause of my impatience," answered she, looking up at him with her great sad eyes. "Go on."

"Now — for I am going to be terribly scholastic — is it not the very definition of man, that he is, alone of all known things, a spirit temporarily united to an animal body?"

"Enchanted in it, as in a dungeon, rather," said he, sighing.

"Be it so if you will. But — must we not say that the archetype — the very man — that if he is the archetype, he too will be, or must have been, once at least, temporarily enchanted into an animal body? ... You are silent. I will not press you. ... Only ask you to consider at your leisure whether Plato may not justify somewhat from the charge of absurdity the Shepherman of Galilee, where he said that He in whose image man is made was made flesh, and dwelt with them bodily there by the lake side at Tiberias, and that

he beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

"That last question is a very different one. God made flesh! My reason revolts at it."

"Old Homer's reason did not."

Hypatia started, for she recollected her yesterday's cravings after those old, palpable, and human deities. And — "Go on," she cried, eagerly.

"Tell me, then — This archetype of man, if it exists anywhere, it must exist eternally in the mind of God? At least, Plato would have so said?"

"Yes."

"And derive its existence immediately from Him?"

"Yes."

"But a man is one willing person, unlike to all others."

"Yes."

"Then this archetype must be such."

"I suppose so."

"But possessing the faculties and properties of all men in their highest perfection."

"Of course."

"How sweetly and obediently my late teacher becomes my pupil!"

Hypatia looked at him with her eyes full of tears.

"I never taught you anything, Raphael."

"You taught me most, beloved lady, when you least thought of it. But tell me one thing more. Is it not the property of every man to be a son? For you can conceive of a man as not being a father, but not as not being a son."

"Be it so."

"Then this archetype must be a son also."

"Whose son, Raphael?"

"Why not of 'Zeus, father of gods and men?' 'or we agreed that it — we will call it he, now, having greed that it is a person — could owe its existence to one but God himself."

"And what then?" said Hypatia, fixing those glo- ious eyes full on his face, in an agony of doubt, but et, as Raphael declared to his dying day, of hope nd joy.

"Well, Hypatia, and must not a son be of the same pecies as his father? 'Eagles,' says the poet, 'do ot beget doves.' Is the word son anything but an mpty and false metaphor, unless the son be the per- ect and equal likeness of his father?"

"Heroes beget sons worse than themselves, says he poet."

"We are not talking now of men as they are, whom Iomer's Zeus calls the most wretched of all the beasts f the field; we are talking — are we not? — of a erfect and archetypal son, and a perfect and archetypal ather, in a perfect and eternal world, wherein is either growth, decay, nor change; and of a perfect and rchetypal generation, of which the only definition can e, that like begets its perfect like? . . . You are silent. e so, Hypatia. . . . We have gone up too far into the bysses." . . . .

And so they both were silent for a while. And Raphael thought solemn thoughts about Victoria, and bout ancient signs of Isaiah's, which were to him none he less prophecies concerning The Man whom he had found, because he prayed and trusted that the same igns might be repeated to himself, and a child given

to him also, as a token that, in spite of all his baseness, "God was with him."

But he was a Jew, and a man: Hypatia was a Greek, and a woman — and for that matter, so were the men of her school. To her, the relations and duties of common humanity shone with none of the awful and divine meaning which they did in the eyes of the converted Jew, awakened for the first time in his life to know the meaning of his own scriptures, and become an Israelite indeed. And Raphael's dialectic, too, though it might silence her, could not convince her. Her creed, like those of her fellow-philosophers, was one of the fancy and the religious sentiment, rather than of the reason and the moral sense. All the brilliant cloud-world in which she had revelled for years, — cosmogonies, emanations, affinities, symbolisms, hierarchies, abysses, eternities, and the rest of it — though she could not rest in them, not even believe in them — though they had vanished into thin air at her most utter need, yet — they were too pretty to be lost sight of for ever; and, struggling against the growing conviction of her reason, she answered at last, —

"And you would have me give up, as you seem to have done, the sublime, the beautiful, the heavenly, for a dry and barren chain of dialectic — in which, for aught I know — for after all, Raphael, I cannot cope with you — I am a woman — a weak woman!"

And she covered her face with her hands.

"For aught you know, what?" asked Raphael, gently.

"You may have made the worse appear the better reason."

"So said Aristophanes of Socrates. But hear me once more, beloved Hypatia. You refuse to give up the beautiful, the sublime, the heavenly? What if Raphael Aben-Ezra, at least, had never found them till now? Recollect what I said just now — what if our old Beautiful, and Sublime, and Heavenly, had been the sheerest materialism, notions spun by our own brains out of the impressions of pleasant things, and high things, and low things, and awful things, which we had seen with our bodily eyes? What if I had discovered that the spiritual is not the intellectual, but the moral; and that the spiritual world is not, as we used to make it, a world of our own intellectual abstractions, or of our own physical emotions, religious or other, but a world of righteous or unrighteous persons? What if I had discovered that one law of the spiritual world, in which all others were contained, was righteousness; and that disharmony with that law, which we called unspirituality, was not being vulgar, or clumsy, or ill-taught, or unimaginative, or dull, but simply being unrighteous? What if I had discovered that righteousness, and it alone, was the beautiful, righteousness the sublime, the heavenly, the Godlike — ay, God himself? And, what if it had dawned on me, as by a great sunrise, what that righteousness was like? What if I had seen a human being, a woman, too, a young weak girl, showing forth the glory and the beauty of God? showing me that the beautiful was to mingle unshrinking, for duty's sake, with all that is most foul and loathsome; that the sublime was to stoop to the most menial offices, the most outwardly-degrading self-denials; that to be heavenly, was to know that the commonest relations, the most vulgar duties, of earth,

were God's commands, and only to be performed aright by the help of the same spirit by which He rules the Universe; that righteousness was to love, to help, to suffer for — if need be, to die for — those who, in themselves, seem fitted to arouse no feelings except indignation and disgust? What if, for the first time, I trust not for the last time, in my life, I saw this vision; and at the sight of it my eyes were opened, and I knew it for the likeness and the glory of God? What if I, a Platonist, like John of Galilee, and Paul of Tarsus, yet, like them, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, had confessed to myself — If the creature can love thus, how much more its archetype? If weak woman can endure thus, how much more a Son of God? If for the good of others, man has strength to sacrifice himself in part, God will have strength to sacrifice himself utterly. If He has not done it, He will do it: or He will be less beautiful, less sublime, less heavenly, less righteous than my poor conception of him, ay, than this weak playful girl! Why should I not believe those who tell me that He has done it already? What if their evidence be, after all, only probability? I do not want mathematical demonstration to prove to me that when a child was in danger his father saved him — neither do I here. My reason, my heart, every faculty of me, except this stupid sensuous experience, which I find deceiving me every moment, which cannot even prove to me my own existence, accepts that story of Calvary as the most natural, most probable, most necessary of earthly events, assuming only that God is a righteous Person, and not some dream of an all-pervading necessary spirit — nonsense which, in its very terms, confesses its own materialism."

Hypatia answered with a forced smile.

"Raphael Aben-Ezra has deserted the method of the severe dialectician for that of the eloquent lover."

"Not altogether," said he, smiling in return. "For suppose that I had said to myself, We Platonists agree that the sight of God is the highest good."

Hypatia once more shuddered at last night's recollections.

"And if He be righteous, and righteousness be — as I know it to be — identical with love, then He will desire that highest good for men far more than they can desire it for themselves. . . . . Then He will desire to show Himself and his own righteousness to them. . . . . Will you make answer, dearest Hypatia, or shall I? . . . . or does your silence give consent? At least let me go on to say this, that if God do desire to show His righteousness to men, his only perfect method, according to Plato, will be that of calumny, persecution, the scourge, and the cross, that so He, like Glaucon's righteous man, may remain for ever free from any suspicion of selfish interest, or weakness of endurance. . . . . Am I deserting the dialectic method now, Hypatia? . . . . You are still silent? You will not hear me, I see. . . . . At some future day, the philosopher may condescend to lend a kinder ear to the words of her greatest debtor. . . . . Or, rather, she may condescend to hear, in her own heart, the voice of that Archetypal Man, who has been loving her, guiding her, heaping her with every perfection of body and of mind, inspiring her with all pure and noble longings, and only asks of her to listen to her own reason, her own philosophy, when they proclaim Him as the giver of them, and to impart them freely and humbly, as He

[illegible] imparted them to her in the [illegible], and she [illegible] and the [illegible] vision [illegible] as well as [illegible] am. . . . Farewell!"

"Stay!" said she, springing up; "whither are you going?"

"To do a little good before I die, having done much evil. To farm, plant, and build, and save some little corner of Ormuzd's earth, as the Persians would say, out of the dominion of Ahriman. To fight Libyan robbers, lead Thracian mercenaries, save a [illegible] orphans from slavery. . . . Perhaps to leave behind me a son of David's line, who will be a better Jew, because a better Christian, than his father. . . . We shall have trouble in the flesh, Augustine tells us. . . . But, as I answered him, I really have had so little thereof yet, that my fair share may probably be rather a useful education than otherwise. Farewell!"

"Stay!" said she. "Come again! — again! And her. . . . . Bring her. . . . . I must see her! She must be noble, indeed, to be worthy of you."

"She is many a hundred miles away."

"Ah? Perhaps she might have taught something to me — me, the philosopher! You need not have feared me. . . . . I have no heart to make converts now. . . . . Oh, Raphael Aben-Ezra, why break the bruised reed? My plans are scattered to the winds, my pupils worthless, my fair name tarnished, my conscience heavy with the thought of my own cruelty. . . . . If you do not know all, you will know it but too soon. . . . . My last hope, Synesius, implores for himself the hope which I need from him. . . . . And, over and above it all. . . . . You! . . . . Et tu, Brute! Why not fold my mantle round me, like Julius of old, and die!"

Raphael stood looking sadly at her, as her whole face sank into utter prostration.

* * * *

"Yes — come. . . . The Galilæan. . . . If he conquers strong men, can the weak maid resist him? Come soon. . . . This afternoon. . . . My heart is breaking fast."

"At the eighth hour this afternoon?"

"Yes. . . . At noon I lecture . . . take my farewell, rather, for ever of the schools. . . . Gods! What have I to say? . . . And tell me about him of Nazareth. Farewell!"

"Farewell, beloved lady! At the ninth hour, you shall hear of him of Nazareth."

Why did his own words sound to him strangely pregnant, all but ominous? He almost fancied that not he, but some third person had spoken them. He kissed Hypatia's hand. It was as cold as ice; and his heart, too, in spite of all his bliss, felt cold and heavy, as he left the room.

As he went down the steps into the street, a young man sprang from behind one of the pillars, and seized his arm.

"Aha, my young Coryphæus of pious plunderers! What do you want with me?"

Philammon, for it was he, looked at him an instant, and recognised him.

"Save her! for the love of God save her!"

"Whom?"

"Hypatia!"

"How long has her salvation been important to you, my good friend?"

"For God's sake," said Philammon, "go back and

warn her! She will hear you — you are rich — you used to be her friend — I know you — I have heard of you. . . . Oh, if you ever cared for her — if you ever felt for her a thousandth part of what I feel — go in and warn her not to stir from home!"

"I must hear more of this," said Raphael, who saw that the boy was in earnest. "Come in with me, and speak to her father."

"No! not into that house! Never into that house again! Do not ask me why: but go yourself. She will not hear me. Did you — did you prevent her from listening?"

"What do you mean?"

"I have been here — ages! I sent a note in by her maid, and she returned no answer."

Raphael recollected then, for the first time, a note which he had seen brought to her during the conversation.

"I saw her receive a note. She tossed it away. Tell me your story. If there is reason in it, I will bear your message myself. Of what is she to be warned?"

"Of a plot — I know that there is a plot — against her among the monks and Parabolani. As I lay in bed this morning in Arsenius's room — they thought I was asleep, —"

"Arsenius? Has that venerable fanatic, then, gone the way of all monastic flesh, and turned persecutor?"

"God forbid! I heard him beseeching Peter the Reader to refrain from something, I cannot tell what; but I caught her name . . . I heard Peter say, 'She that hindereth will hinder till she be taken out of

the way.' And when he went out into the passage I heard him say to another, 'That thou doest, do quickly!'" . . .

"These are slender grounds, my friend."

"Ah, you do not know of what those men are capable!"

"Do I not? Where did you and I meet last?"

Philammon blushed, and burst forth again. "That was enough for me. I know the hatred which they bear her, the crimes which they attribute to her. Her house would have been attacked last night had it not been for Cyril. . . . And I knew Peter's tone. He spoke too gently and softly not to mean something devilish. I watched all the morning for an opportunity of escape, and here I am! — Will you take my message, or see her —"

"What?"

"God only knows, and the devil whom they worship instead of God."

Raphael hurried back into the house — "Could he see Hypatia?" She had shut herself up in her private room, strictly commanding that no visitor should be admitted. . . . "Where was Theon, then?" He had gone out by the canal gate half an hour before, with a bundle of mathematical papers under his arm, no one knew whither. . . . "Imbecile old idiot!" and he hastily wrote on his tablet —

"Do not despise the young monk's warning. I believe him to speak the truth. As you love yourself and your father, Hypatia, stir not out to day."

He bribed a maid to take the message up stairs; and past his time in the hall in warning the servants. But they would not believe him. It was true the shops

were shut in some quarters, and the Museum gardens empty; people were a little frightened after yesterday. But Cyril, they had heard for certain, had threatened excommunication only last night to any Christian who broke the peace; and there had not been a monk to be seen in the streets the whole morning. And so for any harm happening to their mistress — impossible! "The very wild beasts would not tear her," said the huge negro porter, "if she were thrown into the amphitheatre."

Whereat a maid boxed his ears for talking of such a thing; and then, by way of mending it declared that she knew for certain that her mistress could turn aside the lightning, and call legions of spirits to fight for her with a nod. . . . . What was to be done with such idolaters? And yet who could help liking them the better for it?

At last the answer came down, in the old graceful studied, self-conscious handwriting.

"It is a strange way of persuading me to your new faith, to bid me beware, on the very first day of your preaching, of the wickedness of those who believe it. I thank you: but your affection for me makes you timorous. I dread nothing. They will not dare. Did they dare now, they would have dared long ago. As for that youth — to obey or to believe his word, even to seem aware of his existence, were shame to me hence forth. Because he is insolent enough to warn me therefore I will go. Fear not for me. You would not wish me, for the first time in my life, to fear for myself. I must follow my destiny. I must speak the words which I have to speak. Above all, I must let no Christian say, that the philosopher dared less than

the fanatic. If my Gods are Gods, then will they protect me: and if not, let your God prove his rule as seems to him good."

Raphael tore the letter to fragments. . . . . The guards, at least, were not gone mad like the rest of the world. It wanted half an hour of the time of her lecture. In the interval he might summon force enough to crush all Alexandria. And turning suddenly, he darted out of the room and out of the house.

"Quem Deus vult perdere!" cried he to Philammon, with a gesture of grief. "Stay here and stop her! — make a last appeal! Drag the horses' heads down, if you can! I will be back in ten minutes." And he ran off for the nearest gate of the Museum gardens.

On the other side of the gardens lay the court-yard of the palace. There were gates in plenty communicating between them. If he could but see Orestes, even alarm the guard in time! . . .

And he hurried through the walks and alcoves, now deserted by the fearful citizens, to the nearest gate. It was fast, and barricaded firmly on the outside.

Terrified, he ran on to the next; it was barred also. He saw the reason in a moment, and maddened as he saw it. The guards, careless about the Museum, or reasonably fearing no danger from the Alexandrian populace to the glory and wonder of their city, or perhaps wishing wisely enough to concentrate their forces in the narrowest space, had contented themselves with cutting off all communication with the gardens, and so converting the lofty partition-wall into the outer enceinte of their marble citadel. At all events, the doors leading from the Museum itself might be open. He

knew them every one, every hall, passage, statue, picture, almost every book in that vast treasure-house of ancient civilization. He found an entrance; hurried through well-known corridors to a postern through which he and Orestes had lounged a hundred times, their lips full of bad words, their hearts of worse thoughts, gathered in those records of the fair wickedness of old. . . . It was fast. He beat upon it: but no one answered. He rushed on and tried another. No one answered there. Another — still silence and despair! . . . . He rushed up stairs, hoping that from the windows above he might be able to call to the guard. The prudent soldiers had locked and barricaded the entrances to the upper floors of the whole right wing, lest the palace court should be commanded from thence. Whither now? Back — and whither then? Back, round endless galleries, vaulted halls, staircases, doorways, some fast, some open, up and down, trying this way and that, losing himself at whiles in that enormous silent labyrinth. And his breath failed him, his throat was parched, his face burned as with the simoon wind, his legs were trembling under him. His presence of mind, usually so perfect, failed him utterly. He was baffled, netted, there was a spell upon him. Was it a dream? Was it all one of those hideous nightmares of endless pillars beyond pillars, stairs above stairs, rooms within rooms, changing, shifting, lenghtening out for ever and for ever before the dreamer, narrowing, closing in on him, choking him? Was it a dream? Was he doomed to wander for ever and for ever in some palace of the dead, to expiate the sin which he had learnt and done therein? His brain, for the first time in his life, began

to reel. He could recollect nothing but that something dreadful was to happen — and that he had to prevent it, and could not. . . . Where was he now? In a little by chamber. . . . . He had talked with her there a hundred times, looking out over the Pharos and the blue Mediterranean. . . . . What was that roar below? . . . A sea of weltering yelling heads, thousands on thousands, down to the very beach; and from their innumerable throats one mighty war-cry — "God, and the Mother of God!" Cyril's hounds were loose. . . . He reeled from the window, and darted frantically away again. . . . . whither, he knew not, and never knew until his dying day.

And Philammon? . . . . Sufficient for the chapter, as for the day, is the evil thereof.

CHAPTER XIII.

Woman's Love.

PELAGIA had past that night alone in sleepless sorrow, which was not diminished by her finding herself the next morning palpably a prisoner in her own house. Her girls told her that they had orders — they would not say from whom — to prevent her leaving her own apartments. And though some of them made the announcement with sighs and tears of condolence, yet more than one, she could see, was well inclined to make her feel that her power was over, and that there were others besides herself who might aspire to the honour of reigning favourite.

What matter to her? Whispers, sneers, and saucy answers fell on her ear unheeded. She had one idol, she had lost it; one power, and it had failed her. In the heaven above, and in the earth beneath, was neither peace, nor help, nor hope; nothing but black, blank, stupid terror and despair. The little weak infant soul, which had just awakened in her, had been crushed and stunned in its very birth-hour; and instinctively she crept away to the roof of the tower where her apartments were, to sit and weep alone.

There she sat, hour after hour, beneath the shade of the large windsail, which served in all Alexandrian houses the double purpose of a shelter from the sun,

and a ventilator for the rooms below; and her eye roved carelessly over that endless sea of roofs and towers, and masts, and glittering canals, and gliding boats: but she saw none of them — nothing but one beloved face, lost, lost for ever.

At last a low whistle roused her from her dream. She looked up. Across the narrow lane, from one of the embrasures of the opposite house-parapet, bright eyes were peering at her. She moved angrily to escape them.

The whistle was repeated, and a head rose cautiously above the parapet..... It was Miriam's. Casting a careful look around, Pelagia went forward. What could the old woman want with her?

Miriam made interrogative signs, which Pelagia understood as asking her whether she was alone; and the moment that an answer in the negative was returned, Miriam rose, tossed over to her feet a letter weighted with a pebble, and then vanished again.

"I have watched here all day. They refused me admittance below. Beware of Wulf, of every one. Do not stir from your chamber. There is a plot to carry you off to-night, and give you up to your brother the monk; you are betrayed; be brave!"

Pelagia read it with blanching cheek and staring eyes; and took, at least, the last part of Miriam's advice. For walking down the stair, she passed proudly through her own rooms, and commanding back the girls who would have stayed her, with a voice and gesture at which they quailed, went straight down, the letter in her hand, to the apartment where the Amal usually spent his midday hours.

As she approached the door, she heard loud voices

within. . . . His! — yes; but Wulf's also. Her heart failed her, and she stopped a moment to listen. . . . She heard Hypatia's name; and mad with curiosity, crouched down at the lock, and hearkened to every word.

"She will not accept me, Wulf."

"If she will not, she shall go farther and fare worse. Besides, I tell you, she is hard run. It is her last chance, and she will jump at it. The Christians are mad with her; if a storm blows up, her life is not worth — that!"

"It is pity that we have not brought her hither already."

"It is; but we could not. We must not break with Orestes till the palace is in our hands."

"And will it ever be in our hands, my friend?"

"Certain. We were round at every picquet last night, and the very notion of an Amal's heading them made them so eager, that we had to bribe them to be quiet rather than to rise."

"Odin! I wish I were among them now!"

"Wait till the city rises. If the day pass over without a riot, I know nothing. The treasure is all on board, is it not?"

"Yes, and the galleys ready. I have been working like a horse at them all the morning, as you would let me do nothing else. And Goderic will not be back from the palace, you say, till night-fall?"

"If we are attacked first, we are to throw up a fire-signal to him, and he is to come off hither with what Goths he can muster. If the palace is attacked first, he is to give us the signal, and we are to pack up and row round thither. And in the mean while, he is to

nake that hound of a Greek prefect as drunk as he ;an."

"The Greek will see him under the table! He has lrugs, I know, as all these Roman rascals have, to ober him when he likes; and then he sets to work and lrinks again. Send off old Smid, and let him beat the rmourer if he can!"

"A very good thought!" said Wulf, and came out nstantly for the purpose of putting it in practice.

Pelagia had just time to retreat into an adjoining :oorway: but she had heard enough; and as Wulf ;assed, she sprung to him and caught him by the arm.

"Oh, come in hither! Speak to me one moment; or mercy's sake speak to me!" and she drew him, half gainst his will, into the chamber, and throwing herself t his feet, broke out into a childlike wail.

Wulf stood silent, utterly discomfited by this unexected submission, where he had expected petulant and rtful resistance. He almost felt guilty and ashamed, s he looked down into that beautiful imploring face, onvulsed with simple sorrow, as of a child for a broken oy. . . . At last she spoke.

"Oh, what have I done — what have I done? Why ıust you take him from me? What have I done but ove him, honour him, worship him? I know you love im; and I love you for it. — I do indeed! But you — hat is your love to mine? Oh, I would die for him — e torn in pieces for him — now, this moment!" . . .

Wulf was silent.

"What have I done but love him? What could I ish but to make him happy? I was rich enough, raised and petted; . . . . and then he came, ... glo- ous as he is, like a god among men — among apes

rather — and I worshipped him: was I wrong in that? I gave up all for him: was I wrong in that? I gave him myself: what could I do more? He condescended to like me — he, the hero! Could I help submitting? I loved him: could I help loving him? Did I wrong him in that? Cruel, cruel Wulf!" . . . .

Wulf was forced to be stern, or he would have melted at once.

"And what was your love worth to him? What has it done for him? It has made him a sot, an idler, a laughingstock to these Greek dogs, when he might have been their conqueror, their king. Foolish woman, who cannot see that your love has been his bane, his ruin! He, who ought by now to have been sitting upon the throne of the Ptolemies, the lord of all south of the Mediterranean — as he shall be still!"

Pelagia looked at him wide-eyed, as if her mind was taking in slowly some vast new thought, under the weight of which it reeled already. Then she rose slowly.

"And he might be Emperor of Africa?"

"And he shall be; but not —"

"Not with me!" she almost shrieked. "No! not with wretched, ignorant, polluted me! I see — oh, God, I see it all! And this is why you want him to marry her — her —"

She could not utter the dreaded name.

Wulf could not trust himself to speak; but he bowed his head in acquiescence.

* * * * *

"Yes — I will go — up into the desert — with Philammon — and you shall never hear of me again. And I will be a nun, and pray for him, that he may be a great king, and conquer all the world. You will

tell him why I went away, will you not? Yes, I will go, — now, at once —"

She turned away hurriedly, as if to act upon her promise, and then she sprang again to Wulf with a sudden shudder.

"I cannot, Wulf, — I cannot leave him! I shall go mad if I do! Do not be angry; — I will promise anything — take any oath you like, if you will only let me stay here. Only as a slave — as anything — if I may but look at him sometimes. No — not even that — but to be under the same roof with him, only! Oh, let me be but a slave in the kitchen! I will make over all I have to him — to you — to any one! And you shall tell him that I am gone — dead, if you will. — Only let me stay! And I will wear rags, and grind in the mill. . . . . Even that will be delicious, to know that he is eating the bread which I have made! And if I ever dare to speak to him — even to come near him — let the steward hang me up by the wrists, and whip me, like the slave which I deserve to be! . . . . And then shall I soon grow old and ugly with grief, and there will be no more danger then, dear Wulf, will there, from this accursed face of mine? Only promise me that, and — There! he is calling you! Don't let him come in and see me! — I cannot bear it! Go to him, quick, and tell him all. — No, don't tell him yet." . . . .

And she sank down again on the floor, as Wulf went out, murmuring to himself, —

"Poor child! poor child! well for thee this day if thou wert dead, and at the bottom of Hela!"

And Pelagia heard what he said.

Gradually, amid sobs and tears, and stormy confusion of impossible hopes and projects, those words took

root in her mind, and spread, till they filled her whole heart and brain.

"Well for me if I were dead?"

And she rose slowly.

"Well for me if I were dead? And why not? Then it would indeed be all settled. There would be no more danger from poor little Pelagia then." . . . .

She went slowly, firmly, proudly, into the well-known chamber. . . . . She threw herself upon the bed, and covered the pillow with kisses. Her eye fell on the Amal's sword, which hung across the bed's-head, after the custom of Gothic warriors. She seized it, and took it down, shuddering.

"Yes! . . . . Let it be with this, if it must be. And it must be. I cannot bear it! Anything but shame! To have fancied all my life — vain fool that I was! — that every one loved and admired me, and to find that they were despising me, hating me, all along! Those students at the lecture-room door told me I was despised. — The old monk told me so — Fool that I was! I forgot it next day! — For he — he loved me still! — Ah — how could I believe them, till his own lips had said it? . . . . Intolerable! . . . . And yet women as bad as I am have been honoured — when they were dead. What was that song which I used to sing about Epicharis, who hung herself in the litter, and Leaina, who bit out her tongue, lest the torture should drive them to betray their lovers? There used to be a statue of Leaina, they say, at Athens, — a lioness without a tongue. . . . . And whenever I sang the song, the theatre used to rise, and shout, and call them noble and blessed. . . . . I never could tell why then; but I know now! — I know now! Perhaps they

may call me noble, after all. At least, they may say, 'She was — a — but she dare die for the man she loved!' . . . Ay, but God despises me too, and hates me. He will send me to eternal fire. Philammon said so — though he was my brother. The old monk said so — though he wept as he said it. . . . . The flames of hell for ever! Oh, not for ever! Great, dreadful God! Not for ever! Indeed, I did not know! No one taught me about right and wrong, and I never knew that I had been baptized — indeed, I never knew! And it was so pleasant — so pleasant to be happy, and praised, and loved, and to see happy faces round me. How could I help it? The birds there who are singing in the darling, beloved court — they do what they like, and Thou art not angry with them for being happy? And Thou wilt not be more cruel to me than to them, great God — for what did I know more than they? Thou who hast made the beautiful sunshine, and the pleasant, pleasant world, and the flowers, and the birds — Thou wilt not send me to burn for ever and ever? Will not a hundred years be punishment enough — or a thousand? Oh, God! is not this punishment enough already, — to have to leave him, just as I am beginning to long to be good, and to be worthy of him?.... Oh, have mercy — mercy — mercy — and let me go after I have been punished enough! Why may I not turn into a bird, or even a worm, and come back again out of that horrible place, to see the sun shine, and the flowers grow once more? Oh, am I not punishing myself already? Will not this help to atone? . . . . Yes — I will die! — and perhaps so God may pity me!"

And with trembling hands she drew the sword from its sheath, and covered the blade with kisses.

"Yes — on this sword — with which he won his battles. That is right — his to the last! How keen and cold it looks! Will it be very painful? .... No — I will not try the point, or my heart might fail me. I will fall on it at once: let it hurt me as it may, it will be too late to draw back then. And after all it is his sword — It will not have the heart to torture me much. And yet he struck me himself this morning!"

And at that thought, a long wild cry of misery broke from her lips, and rang through the house. Hurriedly she fastened the sword upright to the foot of the bed, and tore open her tunic..... "Here — under this widowed bosom, where his head will never lie again! There are footsteps in the passage! Quick, Pelagia! Now —"

And she threw up her arms wildly, in act to fall....

"It is his step! And he will find me, and never know that it is for him I die!"

The Amal tried the door. It was fast. With a single blow he burst it open, and demanded —

"What was that shriek? What is the meaning of this? Pelagia!"

Pelagia, like a child caught playing with a forbidden toy, hid her face in her hands, and cowered down.

"What is it?" cried he, lifting her.

But she burst from his arms.

"No, no! — never more! I am not worthy of you! Let me die, wretch that I am! I can only drag you down. You must be a king. You must marry her — the wise woman!"

"Hypatia? She is dead!"

"Dead?" shrieked Pelagia.

"Murdered, an hour ago, by those Christian devils."

Pelagia put her hands over her eyes, and burst into tears. Were they of pity or of joy? .... She did not ask herself; and we will not ask her.

"Where is my sword? Soul of Odin! why is it fastened here?"

"I was going to — Do not be angry! ... They told me that I had better die, and —"

The Amal stood thunderstruck for a moment.

"Oh, do not strike me again! Send me to the mill. Kill me now with your own hand! Anything but another blow!"

"A blow? — Noble woman!" cried the Amal, clasping her in his arms.

The storm was past; and Pelagia had been nestling to that beloved heart, cooing like a happy dove, for many a minute before the Amal aroused himself and her....

"Now! — quick! We have not a moment to lose. Up to the tower, where you will be safe; and then to show these curs what comes of snarling round the wild wolves' den!"

CHAPTER XIV.

Nemesis.

And was the Amal's news true, then?

Philammon saw Raphael rush across the street into the Museum gardens. His last words had been a command to stay where he was; and the boy obeyed him. The black porter who let Raphael out told him somewhat insolently, that his mistress would see no one, and receive no messages: but he had made up his mind; complained of the sun, quietly ensconced himself behind a buttress, and sat coiled up on the pavement, ready for a desperate spring. The slave stared at him: but he was accustomed to the vagaries of philosophers; and thanking the gods that he was not born in that station of life, retired to his porter's cell, and forgot the whole matter.

There Philammon waited a full half-hour. It seemed to him hours, days, years. And yet Raphael did not return; and yet no guards appeared. Was the strange Jew a traitor? Impossible! — his face had shown a desperate earnestness of terror, as intense as Philammon's own. . . . . Yet why did he not return?

Perhaps he had found out that the streets were clear; their mutual fears groundless. . . . What meant that black knot of men some two hundred yards off, hanging about the mouth of the side street, just opposite

the door which led to her lecture-room? He moved to watch them: they had vanished. He lay down again and waited. . . . . There they were again. It was a suspicious post. That street ran along the back of the Cæsareium, a favourite haunt of monks, communicating by innumerable entries and back buildings with the great Church itself. . . . . And yet, why should there not be a knot of monks there? What more common in every street of Alexandria? He tried to laugh away his own fears. And yet they ripened, by the very intensity of thinking on them, into certainty. He knew that something terrible was at hand. More than once he looked out from his hiding-place — the knot of men was still there; . . . it seemed to have increased, to draw nearer. If they found him, what would they not suspect? What did he care? He would die for her, if it came to that — not that it could come to that: but still, he must speak to her — he must warn her. Passenger after passenger, carriage after carriage passed along the street; student after student entered the lecture-room: but he never saw them, not though they passed him close. The sun rose higher and higher, and turned his whole blaze upon the corner where Philammon crouched, till the pavement scorched like hot iron, and his eyes were dazzled by the blinding glare: but he never heeded it. His whole heart, and sense, and sight, were riveted upon that well-known door, expecting it to open. . . .

At last, a curricle, glittering with silver, rattled round the corner and stopped opposite him. She must be coming now. The crowd had vanished. Perhaps it was, after all, a fancy of his own. No; there they were, peeping round the corner, close to the lecture-

room — the hell-hounds! A slave brought out an embroidered cushion — and then Hypatia herself came forth, looking more glorious than ever; her lips set in a sad firm smile; her eyes uplifted, inquiring, eager, and yet gentle, dimmed by some great inward awe, as if her soul was far away aloft, and face to face with God.

In a moment he sprang up to her, caught her robe convulsively, threw himself on his knees before her —

"Stop! Stay! You are going to destruction!"

Calmly she looked down upon him.

"Accomplice of witches! Would you make of Theon's daughter a traitor like yourself?"

He sprung up, stepped back, and stood stupified with shame and despair. . . . .

She believed him guilty, then! . . . It was the will of God!

The plumes of the horses were waving far down the street before he recovered himself, and rushed after her, shouting he knew not what.

It was too late! A dark wave of men rushed from the ambuscade, surged up round the car. . . . . swept forward . . . . she had disappeared; and as Philammon followed breathless, the horses galloped past him madly homeward with the empty carriage.

Whither were they dragging her? To the Cæsareium, the Church of God himself? Impossible? Why thither, of all places on the earth? Why did the mob, increasing momentarily by hundreds, pour down upon the beach, and return brandishing flints, shells, fragments of pottery?

She was upon the church steps before he caught

them up, invisible among the crowd; but he could track her by the fragments of her dress.

Where were her gay pupils now? Alas! they had barricaded themselves shamefully in the Museum, at the first rush which swept her from the door of the lecture-room. Cowards! he would save her!

And he struggled in vain to pierce the dense mass of Parabolani and monks, who, mingled with the fish-wives and dock-workers, leaped and yelled around their victim. But what he could not do, another and a weaker did — even the little porter. Furiously — no one knew how or whence — he burst up as if from the ground in the thickest of the crowd, with knife, teeth, and nails, like a venomous wild-cat, tearing his way toward his idol. Alas! he was torn down himself, rolled over the steps, and lay there half dead, in an agony of weeping, as Philammon sprung up past him into the church.

Yes! On into the church itself! Into the cool dim shadow, with its fretted pillars, and lowering domes, and candles, and incense, and blazing altar, and great pictures looking from the walls athwart the gorgeous gloom. And right in front, above the altar, the colossal Christ watching unmoved from off the wall, his right hand raised to give a blessing — or a curse?

On, up the nave, fresh shreds of her dress strewing the holy pavement — up the chancel steps themselves — up to the altar — right underneath the great still Christ: and there even those hell-hounds paused . . .

She shook herself free from her tormentors, and springing back, rose for one moment to her full height, naked, snow-white against the dusky mass around — shame and indignation in those wide clear eyes, but

not a stain of fear. With one hand she clasped her golden locks around her; the other long white arm was stretched upward toward the great still Christ, appealing — and who dare say, in vain? — from man to God. Her lips were opened to speak; but the words that should have come from them reached God's ear alone; for in an instant Peter struck her down, the dark mass closed over her again. . . . and then wail on wail, long, wild, earpiercing, rang along the vaulted roofs, and thrilled like the trumpet of avenging angels through Philammon's ears.

Crushed against a pillar, unable to move in the dense mass, he pressed his hands over his ears. He could not shut out those shrieks! When would they end? What in the name of the God of mercy were they doing? Tearing her piecemeal? Yes, and worse than that. And still the shrieks rang on, and still the great Christ looked down on Philammon with that calm, intolerable eye, and would not turn away. And over his head was written in the rainbow, "I am the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever!" The same as he was in Judea of old, Philammon? Then what are these, and in whose temple? And he covered his face with his hands, and longed to die.

It was over. The shrieks had died away into moans; the moans to silence. How long had he been there? An hour, or an eternity? Thank God it was over! For her sake — but for theirs? But they thought not of that as a new cry rose through the dome.

"To the Cinaron! Burn the bones to ashes! Scatter them into sea!" . . . And the mob poured past him again. . . . .

He turned to flee: but, once outside the church, he

sank exhausted, and lay upon the steps, watching with stupid horror the glaring of the fire, and the mob who leaped and yelled like demons round their Moloch sacrifice.

A hand grasped his arms; he looked up; it was the porter.

"And this, young butcher, is the Catholic and apostolic Church!"

"No! Eudæmon, it is the church of the devils of hell!" And gathering himself up, he sat upon the steps and buried his head within his hands. He would have given life itself for the power of weeping: but his eyes and brain were hot and dry as the desert.

Eudæmon looked at him awhile. The shock had sobered the poor fop for once.

"I did what I could to die with her!" said he.

"I did what I could to save her!" answered Philammon.

"I know it. Forgive the words which I just spoke. Did we not both love her?"

And the little wretch sat down by Philammon's side, and as the blood dripped from his wounds upon the pavement, broke out into a bitter agony of human tears.

There are times when the very intensity of our misery is a boon, and kindly stuns us till we are unable to torture ourselves by thought. And so it was with Philammon then. He sat there, he knew not how long.

"She is with the gods," said Eudæmon at last.

"She is with the God of gods," answered Philammon; and they both were silent again.

Suddenly a commanding voice aroused them.

They looked up, and saw before them Raphael Aben-Ezra.

He was pale as death, but calm as death. One look into his face told them that he knew all.

"Young monk," he said, between his closed teeth, "you seem to have loved her?"

Philammon looked up, but could not speak.

"Then arise, and flee for your life into the farthest corner of the desert, ere the doom of Sodom and Gomorrha fall upon this accursed city. Have you father, mother, brother, sister, — ay, cat, dog, or bird for which you care, within its walls?"

Philammon started; for he recollected Pelagia. . . . That evening, so Cyril had promised, twenty trusty monks were to have gone with him to seize her.

"You have? Then take them with you, and escape, and remember Lot's wife. Eudæmon, come with me. You must lead me to your house, to the lodging of Miriam the Jewess. Do not deny! I know that she is there. For the sake of her who is gone I will hold you harmless, ay, reward you richly, if you prove faithful. Rise!"

Eudæmon, who knew Raphael's face well, rose and led the way trembling: and Philammon was left alone.

They never met again. But Philammon knew that he had been in the presence of a stronger man than himself, and of one who hated even more bitterly than he himself that deed at which the very sun, it seemed, ought to have veiled his face. And his words, "Arise, and flee for thy life," uttered as they were with the stern self-command and writhing lip of compressed

agony, rang through his ears like the trump of doom. Yes, he would flee. He had gone forth to see the world, and he had seen it. Arsenius was in the right after all. Home to the desert! But first he would go himself, alone, to Pelagia, and implore her once more to flee with him. Beast, fool, that he had been, to try to win her by force — by the help of such as these! God's kingdom was not a kingdom of fanatics yelling for a doctrine, but of willing, loving, obedient hearts. If he could not win her heart, her will, he would go alone, and die praying for her.

He sprang from the steps of the Cæsareium, and turned up the street of the Museum. Alas! it was one roaring sea of heads! They were sacking Theon's house — the house of so many memories! Perhaps the poor old man too had perished! Still — his sister! He must save her and flee. And he turned up a side street and tried to make his way onward.

Alas again! the whole of the dock-quarter was up and out. Every street poured its tide of furious fanatics into the main river; and ere he could reach Pelagia's house the sun was set, and close behind him, echoed by ten thousand voices, was the cry of "Down with all heathens! Root out all Arian Goths! Down with idolatrous wantons! Down with Pelagia Aphrodite!"

He hurried down the alley, to the tower door, where Wulf had promised to meet him. It was half open, and in the dusk he could see a figure standing in the doorway. He sprang up the steps, and found, not Wulf but Miriam.

"Let me pass!"

"Wherefore?"

He made no answer, and tried to push past her.

"Fool, fool, fool!" whispered the hag, holding the door against him with all her strength. "Where are your fellow-kidnappers? Where are your band of monks?"

Philammon started back. How had she discovered his plan?

"Ay — where are they? Besotted boy! Have you not seen enough of monkery this afternoon, that you must try still to make that poor girl even such a one as yourselves? Ay, you may root out your own human natures if you will, and make yourselves devils in trying to become angels: but woman she is, and woman she shall live or die!"

"Let me pass!" cried Philammon, furiously.

"Raise your voice — and I raise mine; and then your life is not worth a moment's purchase. Fool, do you think I speak as a Jewess? I speak as a woman — as a nun! I was a nun once, madman — the iron entered into my soul! — God do so to me, and more also, if it ever enter into another soul while I can prevent it! You shall not have her! I will strangle her with my own hand first!" And turning from him, she darted up the winding stair.

He followed: but the intense passion of the old hag hurled her onward with the strength and speed of a young Mænad. Once Philammon was near passing her. But he recollected that he did not know his way, and contented himself with keeping close behind, and making the fugitive his guide.

Stair after stair she fled upward, till she turned suddenly into a chamber door. Philammon paused. A few feet above him the open sky showed at the

stair-head. They were close, then, to the roof! One moment more, and the hag darted out of the room again, and turned to flee upward still. Philammon caught her by the arm, hurled her back into the empty chamber, shut the door upon her; and with a few bounds gained the roof, and met Pelagia face to face.

"Come!" gasped he, breathlessly. "Now is the moment! Come, while they are all below!" and he seized her hand.

But Pelagia only recoiled.

"No, no," whispered she in answer, "I cannot, cannot — he has forgiven me all, all! and I am his for ever! And now, just as he is in danger, when he may be wounded — ah, heaven! would you have me do anything so base as to desert him?"

"Pelagia, Pelagia, darling sister!" cried Philammon, in an agonized voice, "think of the doom of sin! Think of the pains of hell!"

"I have thought of them this day: and I do not believe you! No — I do not! God is not so cruel as you say! And if he were: — to lose my love, that is hell! Let me burn hereafter, if I do but keep him now!"

Philammon stood stupified and shuddering. All his own early doubts flashed across him like a thunderbolt, when in the temple-cave he had seen those painted ladies at their revels, and shuddered, and asked himself, were they burning for ever and ever?

"Come!" gasped he once again; and throwing himself on his knees before her, covered her hands with kisses, wildly entreating: but in vain.

"What is this!" thundered a voice — not Miriam's,

but the Amal's. He was unarmed: but he rushed straight upon Philammon.

"Do not harm him!" shrieked Pelagia; "he is my brother — my brother of whom I told you!"

"What does he here?" cried the Amal, who instantly divined the truth.

Pelagia was silent.

"I wish to deliver my sister, a Christian, from the sinful embraces of an Arian heretic; and deliver her I will, or die!"

"An Arian?" laughed the Amal. "Say a heathen at once, and tell the truth, young fool! Will you go with him, Pelagia, and turn nun in the sand-heaps?"

Pelagia sprang towards her lover; Philammon caught her by the arm for one last despairing appeal: and in a moment, neither knew how, the Goth and the Greek were locked in deadly struggle, while Pelagia stood in silent horror, knowing that a call for help would bring instant death to her brother.

It was over in a few seconds. The Goth lifted Philammon like a baby in his arms, and bearing him to the parapet, attempted to hurl him into the canal below. But the active Greek had wound himself like a snake around him, and held him by the throat with the strength of despair. Twice they rolled and tottered on the parapet; and twice recoiled. A third fearful lunge — the earthen wall gave way; and down to the dark depths, locked in each other's arms, fell Goth and Greek.

Pelagia rushed to the brink, and gazed downward into the gloom, dumb and dry-eyed with horror. Twice they turned over together in mid-air. . . . . The foot of

the tower, as was usual in Egypt, sloped outwards towards the water. They must strike upon that — and then! . . . . It seemed an eternity ere they touched the masonry. . . . . The Amal was undermost. . . . . She saw his fair floating locks dash against the cruel stone. His grasp suddenly loosened, his limbs collapsed; two distinct plunges broke the dark sullen water; and then all was still but the awakened ripple, rapping angrily against the wall.

Pelagia gazed down one moment more, and then, with a shriek which rang along roof and river, she turned, and fled down the stairs and out into the night.

Five minutes afterwards, Philammon, dripping, bruised, and bleeding, was crawling up the water-steps at the lower end of the lane. A woman rushed from the postern door, and stood on the quay edge, gazing with clasped hands into the canal. The moon fell full on her face. It was Pelagia. She saw him, knew him, and recoiled.

"Sister! — my sister! Forgive me!"

"Murderer!" she shrieked, and dashing aside his outspread hands, fled wildly up the passage.

The way was blocked with bales of merchandise: but the dancer bounded over them like a deer; while Philammon, half stunned by his fall, and blinded by his dripping locks, stumbled, fell, and lay, unable to rise. She held on for a few yards towards the torch-lit mob, which was surging and roaring in the main street above, then turned suddenly into a side alley, and vanished; while Philammon lay groaning upon the pavement, without a purpose or a hope upon earth.

Five minutes more, and Wulf was gazing over the broken parapet, at the head of twenty terrified spectators, male and female, whom Pelagia's shriek had summoned.

He alone suspected that Philammon had been there; and shuddering at the thought of what might have happened, he kept his secret.

But all knew that Pelagia had been on the tower; all had seen the Amal go up thither. Where were they now? And why was the little postern gate found open, and shut only just in time to prevent the entrance of the mob?

Wulf stood, revolving in a brain but too well practised in such cases, all possible contingencies of death and horror. At last —

"A rope and a light, Smid!" he almost whispered.

They were brought, and Wulf, resisting all the entreaties of the younger men to allow them to go on the perilous search, lowered himself through the breach.

He was about two-thirds down, when he shook the rope, and called, in a stifled voice to those above —

"Haul up. I have seen enough."

Breathless with curiosity and fear, they hauled him up. He stood among them for a few moments, silent, as if stunned by the weight of some enormous woe.

"Is he dead?"

"Odin has taken his son home, wolves of the Goths!" And he held out his right hand to the awe-struck ring, and burst into an agony of weeping. . . . . A clotted tress of long fair hair lay in his palm.

It was snatched; handed from man to man. . . . . One after another recognised the beloved golden locks. And then, to the utter astonishment of the girls who stood round, the great simple hearts, too brave to be ashamed of tears, broke out, and wailed like children. . . . . Their Amal! Their heavenly man! Odin's own son, their joy and pride, and glory! Their "Kingdom of heaven," as his name declared him, who was all that each wished to be, and more, and yet belonged to them, bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh! Ah, it is bitter to all true human hearts to be robbed of their ideal, even though that ideal be that of a mere wild bull, and soulless gladiator. . . . .

At last Smid spoke: —

"Heroes, this is Odin's doom; and the Allfather is just. Had we listened to Prince Wulf four months ago, this had never been. We have been cowards and sluggards, and Odin is angry with his children. Let us swear to be Prince Wulf's men, and follow him to-morrow where he will!"

Wulf grasped his outstretched hand lovingly —

"No, Smid, son of Troll! These words are not yours to speak. Agilmund son of Cniva, Goderic son of Ermenric, you are Balts, and to you the succession appertains. Draw lots here, which of you shall be our chieftain."

"No! no! Wulf!" cried both the youths at once. "You are the hero! you are the Sagaman! We are not worthy; we have been cowards and sluggards, like the rest. Wolves of the Goths, follow the Wolf, even though he lead you to the land of the giants!"

A roar of applause followed.

"Lift him on the shield," cried Goderic, tearing off

his buckler. "Lift him on the shield! Hail, Wulf king! Wulf, king of Egypt!"

And the rest of the Goths, attracted by the noise, rushed up the tower-stairs in time to join in the mighty shout of "Wulf, king of Egypt!" — as careless of the vast multitude which yelled and surged without, as boys are of the snow against the window-pane.

"No!" said Wulf, solemnly, as he stood on the uplifted shield. "If I be indeed your king, and ye my men, wolves of the Goths, to-morrow we will go forth of this place, hated of Odin, rank with the innocent blood of the Alruna maid. Back to Adolf; back to our own people! Will you go?"

"Back to Adolf!" shouted the men.

"You will not leave us to be murdered?" cried one of the girls. "The mob are breaking the gates already!"

"Silence, silly one! Men — we have one thing to do. The Amal must not go to the Valhalla without fair attendance."

"Not the poor girls?" said Agilmund, who took for granted that Wulf would wish to celebrate the Amal's funeral in true Gothic fashion by a slaughter of slaves.

"No. . . . . One of them I saw behave this very afternoon worthy of a Vala. And they, too — they may make heroes' wives after all, yet. . . . . Women are better than I fancied, even the worst of them. No. Go down, heroes, and throw the gates open; and call in the Greek hounds to the funeral supper of a son of Odin."

"Throw the gates open?"

"Yes. Goderic, take a dozen men, and be ready n the east hall. Agilmund, go with a dozen to the vest side of the court — there in the kitchen; and vait till you hear my war-cry. Smid and the rest of ou, come with me through the stables close to the ate — as silent as Hela."

And they went down — to meet, full on the stairs elow, old Miriam.

Breathless and exhausted by her exertion, she had allen heavily before Philammon's strong arm; and ying half stunned for a while, recovered just in time o meet her doom.

She knew that it was come, and faced it like erself.

"Take the witch!" said Wulf, slowly — "Take he corrupter of heroes — the cause of all our sor- ows!"

Miriam looked at him with a quiet smile.

"The witch is accustomed long ago to hear fools ay on her the consequences of their own lust and aziness."

"Hew her down, Smid, son of Troll, that she may ass the Amal's soul and gladden it upon her way o Niflheim."

Smid dit it: but so terrible were the eyes which lared upon him from those sunken sockets, that his ight was dazzled. The axe turned aside, and struck er shoulder. She reeled, but did not fall.

"It is enough," she said, quietly.

"The accursed Grendel's daughter numbed my rm!" said Smid. "Let her go! No man shall say hat I struck a woman twice."

"Nidhogg waits for her, soon or late," answered Wulf.

And Miriam, coolly folding her shawl around her, turned and walked steadily down the stair; while all men breathed more freely, as if delivered from some accursed and supernatural spell.

"And now," said Wulf, "to your posts, and vengeance!"

The mob had weltered and howled ineffectually around the house for some half-hour. But the lofty walls, opening on the street only by a few narrow windows in the higher stories, rendered it an impregnable fortress. Suddenly, the iron gates were drawn back, disclosing to the front rank the court, glaring empty and silent and ghastly in the moonlight. For an instant they recoiled, with a vague horror, and dread of treachery: but the mass behind pressed them onward, and in swept the murderers of Hypatia, till the court was full of choking wretches, surging against the walls and pillars in aimless fury. And then, from under the archway on each side, rushed a body of tall armed men, driving back all incomers more; the gates slid together again upon their grooves; and the wild beasts of Alexandria were trapped at last.

And then began a murder grim and great. From three different doors issued a line of Goths, whose helmets and mail-shirts made them invulnerable to the clumsy weapons of the mob, and began hewing their way right through the living mass, helpless from their close-packed array. True, they were but as one to ten; but what are ten curs before one lion? .... And the moon rose higher and higher, staring down ghastly and unmoved upon that doomed court of the furies,

and still the bills and swords hewed on and on, and the Goths drew the corpses, as they found room, towards a dark pile in the midst, where old Wulf sat upon a heap of slain, singing the praises of the Amal and the glories of Valhalla, while the shrieks of his lute rose shrill above the shrieks of the flying and the wounded, and its wild waltz-time danced and rollicked on swifter and swifter as the old singer maddened, in awful mockery of the terror and agony around.

And so, by men and purposes which recked not of her, as is the wont of Providence, was the blood of Hypatia avenged in part that night.

In part only. For Peter the Reader, and his especial associates, were safe in sanctuary at the Cæsareium, clinging to the altar. Terrified at the storm which they had raised, and fearing the consequences of an attack upon the palace, they had left the mob to run riot at its will; and escaped the swords of the Goths, to be reserved for the more awful punishment of impunity.

CHAPTER XV.

Every Man to His Own Place.

It was near midnight. Raphael had been sitting some three hours in Miriam's inner chamber, waiting in vain for her return. To recover, if possible, his ancestral wealth; to convey it, without a day's delay, to Cyrene; and, if possible, to persuade the poor old Jewess to accompany him, and there to soothe, to guide, perhaps to convert her, was his next purpose: — at all events, with or without his wealth, to flee from that accursed city. And he counted impatiently the slow hours and minutes which detained him in an atmosphere which seemed reeking with innocent blood, black with the lowering curse of an avenging God. More than once, unable to bear the thought, he rose to depart, and leave his wealth behind: but he was checked again by the thought of his own past life. How had he added his own sin to the great heap of Alexandrian wickedness! How had he tempted others, pampered others in evil! Good God! how had he not only done evil with all his might, but had pleasure in those who did the same! And now, now he was reaping the fruit of his own devices. For years past, merely to please his lust of power, his misanthropic scorn, he had been making that wicked Orestes wickeder than he was even by his own base will and

nature; and his puppet had avenged itself upon him! He, he had prompted him to ask Hypatia's hand..... He had laid, half in sport, half in envy of her excellence, that foul plot against the only human being whom he loved..... and he had destroyed her! He, and not Peter, was the murderer of Hypatia! True, he had never meant her death..... No; but had he not meant for her worse than death? He had never foreseen..... No; but only because he did not choose to foresee. He had chosen to be a god; to kill and to make alive by his own will and law: and behold, he had become a devil by that very act. Who can — and who dare, even if he could — withdraw the sacred veil from those bitter agonies of inward shame and self-reproach, made all the more intense by his clear and undoubting knowledge that he was forgiven? What dread of punishment, what blank despair, could have pierced that great heart so deeply as did the thought that the God whom he had hated and defied had returned him good for evil, and rewarded him not according to his iniquities? That discovery, as Ezekiel of old had warned his fore-fathers, filled up the cup of his self-loathing..... To have found at last the hated and dreaded name of God: and found that it was Love! .... To possess Victoria, a living, human likeness, however imperfect, of that God; and to possess in her a home, a duty, a purpose, a fresh clear life of righteous labour, perhaps of final victory..... That was his punishment; that was the brand of Cain upon his forehead; and he felt it greater than he could bear.

But at least there was one thing to be done. Where he had sinned, there he must make amends;

not as a propitiation, not even as a restitution; but simply as a confession of the truth which he had found. And as his purpose shaped itself, he longed and prayed that Miriam might return, and make it possible.

And Miriam did return. He heard her pass slowly through the outer room, learn from the girls who was within, order them out of the apartments, close the outer door upon them; at last she entered, and said quietly, —

"Welcome! I have expected you. You could not surprise old Miriam. The teraph told me, last night, that you would be here." . . . .

Did she see the smile of incredulity upon Raphael's face, or was it some sudden pang of conscience which made her cry out —

". . . . No! I did not! I never expected you! I am a liar, a miserable old liar, who cannot speak the truth, even if I try! Only look kind! Smile at me, Raphael! — Raphael come back at last to his poor miserable, villanous old mother! Smile on me but once, my beautiful, my son! my son!"

And springing to him, she clasped him in her arms.

"Your son?"

"Yes, my son! Safe at last! Mine at last! I can prove it now! The son of my womb, though not the son of my vows!" And she laughed hysterically. "My child, my heir, for whom I have toiled and hoarded for three-and-thirty years. Quick! here are my keys. In that cabinet are all my papers — all I have is yours. Your jewels are safe — buried with mine. The negro-woman, Eudæmon's wife, knows

where. I made her swear secrecy upon her little wooden idol, and, Christian as she is, she has been honest. Make her rich for life. She hid your poor old mother, and kept her safe to see her boy come home. But give nothing to her little husband; he is a bad fellow, and beats her. — Go, quick! take your riches, and away! . . . No, stay one moment — just one little moment — that the poor old wretch may feast her eyes with the sight of her darling once more before she dies!"

"Before you die? Your son? God of my fathers, what is the meaning of all this, Miriam? This morning I was the son of Ezra the merchant of Antioch!"

"His son and heir, his son and heir! He knew all at last. We told him on his death-bed! I swear that we told him, and he adopted you!"

"We! Who?"

"His wife and I. He craved for a child, the old miser, and we gave him one — a better one than ever came of his family. But he loved you, accepted you, though he did know all. He was afraid of being laughed at after he was dead — afraid of having it known that he was childless, the old dotard! No — he was right — true Jew in that, after all!"

"Who was my father, then?" interrupted Raphael, in utter bewilderment.

The old woman laughed a laugh so long and wild, that Raphael shuddered.

"Sit down at your mother's feet. Sit down . . . just to please the poor old thing! Even if you do not believe her, just play at being her child, her darling,

for a minute before she dies; and she will tell you all .... perhaps there is time yet!" ....

And he sat down. .... "What if this incarnation of all wickedness were really my mother? .... And yet — why should I shrink thus proudly from the notion? Am I so pure myself as to deserve a purer source?".... And the old woman laid her hand fondly on his head, and her skinny fingers played with his soft locks, as she spoke hurriedly and thick.

"Of the house of Jesse, of the seed of Solomon; not a rabbi from Babylon to Rome dare deny that! A king's daughter I am, and a king's heart I had, and have, like Solomon's own, my son! ... A kingly heart .... It made me dread and scorn to be a slave, a plaything, a soulless doll, such as Jewish women are condemned to be by their tyrants, the men. I craved for wisdom, renown, power — power — power; and my nation refused them to me; because, forsooth, I was a woman! So I left them. I went to the Christian priests .... They gave me what I asked .... They gave me more .... they pampered my woman's vanity, my pride, my self-will, my scorn of wedded bondage, and bade me be a saint, the judge of angels and archangels, the bride of God! Liars! liars! And so — if you laugh, you kill me, Raphael — and so Miriam, the daughter of Jonathan — Miriam; of the house of David — Miriam, the descendant of Ruth and Rachab, of Rachel and Sara, became a Christian nun, and shut herself up to see visions, and dream dreams, and fattened her own mad self-conceit upon the impious fancy that she was the spouse of the Nazarene, Joshua Bar-Joseph, whom she called Jehovah-Ishi — silence! If you stop me a moment, it may be too late. I hear

calling me already; and I made them promise
take me before I had told all to my son — the
my shame!"

Who calls you?" asked Raphael; but after one
shudder she ran on, unheeding, —

ut they lied, lied, lied! I found them out that
. . . Do not look up at me, and I will tell you
here was a riot — a fight between the Christian
and the Heathen devils — and the convent was
, Raphael, my son! — Sacked! . . . . Then I
out their blasphemy. . . . Oh, God! I shrieked
, Raphael! I called on him to rend his heavens
me down — to pour out his thunderbolts upon
— to cleave the earth and devour them — to
he wretched helpless girl who adored him, who
ven up father, mother, kinsfolk, wealth, the light
ven, womanhood itself for him — who worshipped,
ted over him, dreamed of him night and
. . . And, Raphael, he did not hear me. . . . . he
t hear me . . . . did not hear me! . . . . And then
v it all for a lie! a lie!"

nd you knew it for what it is!" cried Raphael
h his sobs, as he thought of Victoria, and felt
vein burning with righteous wrath.

"There was no mistaking that test, was there?
For nine months I was mad. And then your
my baby, my joy, my pride — that brought me
self once more! And I shook off the dust of
et against those Galilæan priests, and went back
own nation, where God had set me from the
ing. I made them — the Rabbis, my father, my
- I made them all receive me. They could not
before my eye. I can make people do what I

will, Raphael! I could — I could make you emperor now, if I had but time left! I went back. I palmed you off on Ezra as his son, I and his wife, and made him believe that you had been born to him while he was in Byzantium. . . . . And then — to live for you! And I did live for you. For you I travelled from India to Britain, seeking wealth. For you I toiled, hoarded, lied, intrigued, won money by every means, no matter how base — for was it not for you? And I have conquered! You are the richest Jew south of the Mediterranean, you, my son! And you deserve your wealth. You have your mother's soul in you, my boy! I watched you, gloried in you — in your cunning, your daring, your learning, your contempt for these Gentile hounds. You felt the royal blood of Solomon within you! You felt that you were a young lion of Judah, and they the jackals who followed to feed upon your leavings! And now, now! Your only danger is past! The cunning woman is gone — the sorceress who tried to take my young lion in her pitfall, and has fallen into the midst of it herself; and he is safe, and returned to take the nations for a prey, and grind their bones to powder, as it is written, 'he couched like a lion, he lay down like a lioness's whelp, and who dare rouse him up?'"

"Stop!" said Raphael, "I must speak! Mother! I must! As you love me, as you expect me to love you, answer! Had you a hand in her death? Speak!"

"Did I not tell you that I was no more a Christian? Had I remained one — who can tell what I might not have done? All I, the Jewess, dare do

as — Fool that I am! I have forgotten all this time e proof — the proof" —

"I need no proof, mother. Your words are enough," id Raphael, as he clasped her hand between his rn, and pressed it to his burning forehead. But the d woman hurried on — "See! See the black agate hich you gave her in your madness!"

"How did you obtain that!"

"I stole it — stole it, my son: as thieves steal, and e crucified for stealing. What was the chance of e cross to a mother yearning for her child? — to a other who put round her baby's neck, three-and-thirty ack years ago, that broken agate, and kept the other alf next her own heart by day and night? See! See ow they fit! Look, and believe your poor old sinful other! Look, I say!" and she thrust the talisman to his hands.

"Now, let me die! I vowed never to tell this cret but to you: never to tell it to you, until the ight I died. Farewell, my son! Kiss me but once - once, my child, my joy! Oh, this makes up for l! Makes up even for that day, the last on which ever dreamed myself the bride of the Nazarene!"

Raphael felt that he must speak, now or never. 'hough it cost him the loss of all his wealth, and a other's curse, he must speak. And not daring to ok up, he said gently, —

"Men have lied to you about Him, mother: but has e ever lied to you about Himself? He did not lie me, when He sent me out into the world to find man, and sent me back again to you with the good ews that The Man is born into the world."

But to his astonishment, instead of the burst of

bigoted indignation which he had expected, Miriam answered in a low, confused, abstracted voice, —

"And did He send you hither? Well — that was more like what I used to fancy Him. . . . . A grand thought it is after all — a Jew the king of heaven and earth! . . . . Well — I shall know soon. . . . I loved Him once, ... and perhaps . . . . . perhaps . . . ."

Why did her head drop heavily upon his shoulder? He turned — a dark stream of blood was flowing from her lips! He sprang to his feet. The girls rushed in. They tore open her shawl, and saw the ghastly wound, which she had hidden with such iron resolution to the last. But it was too late. Miriam the daughter of Solomon was gone to her own place.

* * * *

Early the next morning, Raphael was standing in Cyril's ante-room, awaiting an audience. There were loud voices within; and after a while a tribune whom he knew well hurried out, muttering curses —

"What brings you here, friend?" said Raphael.

"The scoundrel will not give them up," answered he, in an undertone.

"Give up whom?"

"The murderers. They are in sanctuary now, at the Cæsareium. Orestes sent me to demand them: and this fellow defies him openly!" And the tribune hurried out.

Raphael, sickened with disgust, half-turned to follow him: but his better angel conquered, and he obeyed the summons of the deacon who ushered him in.

Cyril was walking up and down, according to his custom, with great strides. When he saw who was

his visitor, he stopped short with a look of fierce inquiry. Raphael entered on business at once, with a cold calm voice.

"You know me, doubtless; and you know what I was. I am now a Christian catechumen. I come to make such restitution as I can for certain past ill-deeds done in this city. You will find among these papers the trust deeds for such a yearly sum of money as will enable you to hire a house of refuge for a hundred fallen women, and give such dowries to thirty of them yearly as will enable them to find suitable husbands. I have set down every detail of my plan. On its exact fulfilment depends the continuance of my gift."

Cyril took the document eagerly, and was breaking out with some commonplace about pious benevolence, when the Jew stopped him.

"Your Holiness's compliments are unnecessary. It is to your office, not to yourself, that this business relates."

Cyril, whose conscience was ill enough at ease that morning, felt abashed before Raphael's dry and quiet manner, which bespoke, as he well knew, reproof more severe than all open upbraidings. So looking down, not without something like a blush, he ran his eye hastily over the paper; and then said, in his blandest tone, —

"My brother will forgive me for remarking, that while I acknowledge his perfect right to dispose of his charities as he will, it is somewhat startling to me, as Metropolitan of Egypt, to find not only the Abbot Isidore of Pelusium, but the secular Defender of the

Plebs, a civil officer, implicated, too, in the late conspiracy, associated with me as co-trustees."

"I have taken the advice of more than one Christian bishop on the matter. I acknowledge your authority, by my presence here. If the Scriptures say rightly, the civil magistrates are as much God's ministers as you; and I am therefore bound to acknowledge their authority also. I should have preferred associating the prefect with you in the trust: but as your dissensions with the present occupant of that post might have crippled my scheme, I have named the Defender of the Plebs, and have already put into his hands a copy of this document. Another copy has been sent to Isidore, who is empowered to receive all moneys from my Jewish bankers in Pelusium."

"You doubt, then, either my ability or my honesty?" said Cyril, who was becoming somewhat nettled.

"If your Holiness dislikes my offer, it is easy to omit your name in the deed. One word more. If you deliver up to justice the murderers of my friend Hypatia, I double my bequest on the spot."

Cyril burst out instantly —

"Thy money perish with thee! Do you presume to bribe me into delivering up my children to the tyrant?"

"I offer to give you the means of showing more mercy, provided that you will first do simple justice."

"Justice?" cried Cyril. "Justice? If it be just that Peter should die, sir, see first whether it was not just that Hypatia should die! Not that I compassed it. As I live, I would have given my own right hand that this had not happened! But now that

it is done — let those who talk of justice look first in which scale of the balance it lies! Do you fancy, sir, that the people do not know their enemies from their friends? Do you fancy that they are to sit with folded hands, while a pedant makes common cause with a profligate, to drag them back again into the very black gulf of outer darkness, ignorance, brutal lust, grinding slavery, from which The Son of God died to free them, from which they are painfully and slowly struggling upward to the light of day? You, sir, if you be a Christian catechumen, should know for yourself what would have been the fate of Alexandria had the devil's plot of two days since succeeded. What if the people struck too fiercely? They struck in the right place. What if they have given the rein to passions fit only for heathens? Recollect the centuries of heathendom which bred those passions in them, and blame not my teaching, but the teaching of their forefathers. That very Peter. . . . . What if he have for once given place to the devil, and avenged where he should have forgiven? Has he no memories which may excuse him for fancying, in a just paroxysm of dread, that idolatry and falsehood must be crushed at any risk? — He who counts back for now three hundred years, in persecution after persecution, martyrs, sir! martyrs — if you know what that word implies — of his own blood and kin; who, when he was but a seven years' boy, saw his own father made a sightless cripple to this day, and his elder sister, a consecrated nun, devoured alive by swine in the open streets, at the hands of those who supported the very philosophy, the very gods, which Hypatia attempted yesterday to restore. God shall judge such a man; not I, nor you!"

"Let God judge him, then, by delivering him to God's minister."

"God's minister? That heathen and apostate prefect? When he has expiated his apostasy by penance, and returned publicly to the bosom of the church, it will be time enough to obey him: till then he is the minister of none but the devil. And no ecclesiastic shall suffer at the tribunal of an infidel. Holy Writ forbids us to go to law before the unjust. Let the world say of me what it will. I defy it and its rulers. I have to establish the kingdom of God in this city, and do it I will, knowing that other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ."

"Wherefore you proceed to lay it afresh. A curious method of proving that it is laid already."

"What do you mean?" asked Cyril, angrily.

"Simply that God's kingdom, if it exist at all, must be a sort of kingdom, considering Who is The King of it, which would have established itself without your help some time since; probably, indeed, if the Scriptures of my Jewish forefathers are to be believed, before the foundation of the world; and that your business was to believe that God was King of Alexandria, and had put the Roman law there to crucify all murderers, ecclesiastics included, and that crucified they must be accordingly, as high as Haman himself."

"I will hear no more of this, sir! I am responsible to God alone, and not to you: let it be enough that by virtue of the authority committed to me, I shall cut off these men from the church of God, by solemn excommunication for three years to come."

"They are not cut off, then, it seems, as yet?"

"I tell you, sir, that I shall cut them off! Do you come here to doubt my word?"

"Not in the least, most august sir. But I should have fancied that, according to my carnal notions of God's Kingdom and The Church, they had cut off themselves most effectually already, from the moment when they cast away the Spirit of God, and took to themselves the spirit of murder and cruelty; and that all which your most just and laudable excommunication could effect, would be to inform the public of that fact. However, farewell! My money shall be forthcoming in due time; and that is the most important matter between us at this moment. As for your client Peter and his fellows, perhaps the most fearful punishment which can befal them, is to go on as they have begun. I only hope that you will not follow in the same direction."

"I?" cried Cyril, trembling with rage.

"Really I wish your Holiness well when I say so. If my notions seem to you somewhat secular, yours — forgive me — seem to me somewhat atheistic; and I advise you honestly to take care lest while you are busy trying to establish God's kingdom, you forget what it is like, by shutting your eyes to those of its laws which are established already. I have no doubt that with your Holiness's great powers you will succeed in establishing something. My only dread is, that when it is established, you should discover to your horror that it is the devil's kingdom, and not God's."

And without waiting for an answer, Raphael bowed himself out of the august presence, and sailing for Berenice that very day, with Eudæmon and his negro

wife, went to his own place; there to labour and to succour, a sad and stern, and yet a loving and a much-loved man, for many a year to come.

And now we will leave Alexandria also, and taking a forward leap of some twenty years, see how all other persons mentioned in this history went, likewise, each to their own place.

* * * * *

A little more than twenty years after, the wisest and holiest man in the east was writing of Cyril, just deceased —

"His death made those who survived him joyful; but it grieved most probably the dead; and there is cause to fear, lest, finding his presence too troublesome, they should send him back to us. . . . . May it come to pass, by your prayers, that he may obtain mercy and forgiveness, and that the immeasurable grace of God may prevail over his wickedness." . . . .

So wrote Theodoret, in days when men had not yet intercalated into Holy Writ that line of an obscure modern hymn, which proclaims to man the good news that "There is no repentance in the grave." Let that be as it may, Cyril has gone to his own place. What that place is in history is but too well known. What it is in the sight of Him unto Whom all live for ever, is no concern of ours. May He whose mercy is over all his works, have mercy upon all, whether orthodox or unorthodox, Papist or Protestant, who, like Cyril, begin by lying for the cause of truth; and setting off upon that evil road, arrive surely, with the Scribes and Pharisees of old, sooner or later at their own place.

True, he and his monks had conquered: but Hypatia did not die unavenged. In the hour of that unrighteous victory, the Church of Alexandria received a deadly wound. It had admitted and sanctioned those habits of doing evil that good may come, of pious intrigue, and at last of open persecution, which are certain to creep in wheresoever men attempt to set up a merely religious empire, independent of human relationships and civil laws; — to "establish," in short, a "theocracy," and by that very act confess their secret disbelief that God is ruling already. And the Egyptian Church grew, year by year, more lawless and inhuman. Freed from enemies without, and from the union which fear compels, it turned its ferocity inward, to prey on its own vitals, and to tear itself in pieces, by a voluntary suicide, with mutual anathemas and exclusions, till it ended as a mere chaos of idolatrous sects, persecuting each other for metaphysical propositions, which, true or false, were equally heretical in their mouths, because they used them only as watchwords of division. Orthodox or unorthodox, they knew not God, for they knew neither righteousness, nor love, nor peace. .... They "hated their brethren, and walked on still in darkness, not knowing whither they were going" .... till Amrou and his Mahommedans appeared; and, whether they discovered the fact or not, they went to their own place. ....

> Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;
> Though He stands and waits with patience, with exactness grinds He all. —

And so found, in due time, the philosophers as well as the ecclesiastics of Alexandria.

Twenty years after Hypatia's death, philosophy was flickering down to the very socket. Hypatia's murder was its death-blow. In language tremendous and unmistakable, philosophers had been informed that mankind had done with them; that they had been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; that if they had no better Gospel than that to preach, they must make way for those who had. And they did make way. We hear little or nothing of them or their wisdom henceforth, except at Athens, where Proclus, Marinus, Isidore, and others, kept up "the golden chain of the Platonic succession," and descended deeper and deeper, one after the other, into the realms of confusion — confusion of the material with the spiritual, of the subject with the object, the moral with the intellectual; self-consistent in one thing only, — namely, in their exclusive Pharisaism; utterly unable to proclaim any good news for man as man, or even to conceive of the possibility of such, and gradually looking with more and more complacency on all superstitions which did not involve that one idea, which alone they hated, — namely, the Incarnation; craving after signs and wonders, dabbling in magic, astrology, and barbarian fetichisms; bemoaning the fallen age, and barking querulously at every form of human thought except their own; writing pompous biographies, full of bad Greek, worse taste, and still worse miracles. . . . .

> — That last drear mood
> Of envious sloth, and proud decrepitude;
> No faith, no art, no king, no priest, no God;
> While round the freezing founts of life in snarling ring,
> Crouch'd on the bareworn sod,
> Babbling about the unreturning spring,

> And whining for dead gods, who cannot save,
> The toothless systems shiver to their grave.

The last scene of their tragedy was not without a ›uch of pathos. . . . In the year 529, Justinian finally losed, by imperial edict, the schools of Athens. They ad nothing more to tell the world, but what the ·orld had yawned over a thousand times before: why hould they break the blessed silence by any more uch noises? The philosophers felt so themselves. 'hey had no mind to be martyrs, for they had nothing ›r which to testify. They had no message for man·ind, and mankind no interest for them. All that was ›ft for them was to take care of their own souls; and ancying that they saw something like Plato's ideal epublic in the pure monotheism of the Guebres, their hilosophic emperor the Khozroo, and his holy caste f magi, seven of them set off to Persia, to forget the ıateful existence of Christianity in that realized ideal. Alas for the facts! The purest monotheism, they dis·overed, was perfectly compatible with bigotry and ferocity, luxury and tyranny, serails and bowstrings, ncestuous marriages and corpses exposed to the beasts f the field and the fowls of the air; and in reasonable ear for their own necks, the last seven Sages of Greece eturned home, weary-hearted, into the Christian Empire rom which they had fled, fully contented with the ›ermission which the Khozroo had obtained for them rom Justinian, to hold their peace, and die among lecent people. So among decent people they died, eaving behind them, as their last legacy to mankind, Simplicius's Commentaries on Epictetus's Enchiridion, n essay on the art of egotism, by obeying which, whosoever list may become as perfect a Pharisee as

ever darkened the earth of God. Peace be to their ashes! . . . They are gone to their own place.

* * * *

Wulf, too, had gone to his own place, wheresoever that may be. He died in Spain, full of years and honours, at the court of Adolf and Placidia, having resigned his sovereignty into the hands of his lawful chieftain, and having lived long enough to see Goderic and his younger companions in arms settled with their Alexandrian brides up on the sunny slopes from which they had expelled the Vandals and the Suevi, to be the ancestors of "bluest-blooded" Castilian nobles. Wulf died, as he had lived, a heathen. Placidia, who loved him well, as she loved all righteous and noble souls, had succeeded once in persuading him to accept baptism. Adolf himself acted as one of his sponsors; and the old warrior was in the act of stepping into the font, when he turned suddenly to the bishop, and asked where were the souls of his heathen ancestors? "In hell," replied the worthy prelate. Wulf drew back from the font, and threw his bearskin cloak around him. . . . "He would prefer, if Adolf had no objection, to go to his own people."* And so he died unbaptized, and went to his own place.

Victoria was still alive and busy: but Augustine's warning had come true — she had found trouble in the flesh. The day of the Lord had come, and Vandal tyrants were now the masters of the fair corn lands of Africa. Her father and brother were lying by the side of Raphael Aben-Ezra, beneath the ruined walls of

* A fact.

Hippo, slain, long years before, in the vain attempt to deliver their country from the invading swarms. But they had died the death of heroes; and Victoria was content. And it was whispered, among the down-trodden Catholics, who clung to her as an angel of mercy, that she, too, had endured strange misery and disgrace .... that her delicate limbs bore the scars of fearful tortures .... that a room in her house, into which none ever entered but herself, contained a young boy's grave; and that she passed long nights of prayer upon the spot, where lay her only child, martyred by the hands of Arian persecutors. Nay, some of the few who having dared to face that fearful storm, had survived its fury, asserted that she herself, amid her own shame and agony, had cheered the shrinking boy on to his glorious death. But though she had found trouble in the flesh, her spirit knew none. Clear-eyed and joyful as when she walked by her father's side on the field of Ostia, she went to and fro among the victims of Vandal rapine and persecution, spending upon the maimed, the sick, the ruined, the small remnants of her former wealth, and winning, by her purity and her piety, the reverence and favour even of the barbarian conquerors. She had her work to do, and she did it, and was content; and, in good time, she also went to her own place.

Abbot Pambo, as well as Arsenius, had been dead several years; the abbot's place was filled, by his own dying command, by a hermit from the neighbouring deserts, who had made himself famous for many miles round, by his extraordinary austerities, his ceaseless prayers, his loving wisdom, and, it was rumoured, by various cures which could be only attributed to mira-

culous powers. While still in the prime of his manhood, he was dragged, against his own entreaties, from a lofty cranny of the cliffs to preside over the Laura of Scetis, and ordained a deacon at the advice of Pambo, by the bishop of the diocese, who, three years afterwards, took on himself to command him to enter the priesthood. The elder monks considered it an indignity to be ruled by so young a man: but the monastery throve and grew rapidly under his government. His sweetness, patience, and humility, and, above all, his marvellous understanding of the doubts and temptations of his own generation, soon drew around him all whose sensitiveness or waywardness had made them unmanageable in the neighbouring monasteries. As to David in the mountains, so to him, every one who was discontented, and every one who was oppressed, gathered themselves. The neighbouring abbots were at first inclined to shrink from him, as one who ate and drank with publicans and sinners: but they held their peace, when they saw those whom they had driven out as reprobates labouring peacefully and cheerfully under Philammon. The elder generation of Scetis, too, saw, with some horror, the new influx of sinners: but their abbot had but one answer to their remonstrances — "Those who are whole need not a physician, but those who are sick."

Never was the young abbot heard to speak harshly of any human being. "When thou hast tried in vain for seven years," he used to say, "to convert a sinner, then only wilt thou have a right to suspect him of being a worse man than thyself." That there is a seed of good in all men, a Divine Word and Spirit striving with all men, a gospel and good news which would

turn the hearts of all men, if abbots and priests could but preach it aright, was his favourite doctrine, and one which he used to defend, when, at rare intervals, he allowed himself to discuss any subject, from the writings of his favourite theologian, Clement of Alexandria. Above all, he stopped, by stern rebuke, any attempt to revile either heretics or heathens. "On the Catholic Church alone," he used to say, "lies the blame of all heresy and unbelief: for if she were but for one day that which she ought to be, the world would be converted before nightfall." To one class of sins, indeed, he was inexorable — all but ferocious; to the sins, namely, of religious persons. In proportion to any man's reputation for orthodoxy and sanctity, Philammon's judgment of him was stern and pitiless. More than once events proved him to have been unjust: when he saw himself to be so, none could confess his mistake more frankly, or humiliate himself for it more bitterly: but from his rule he never swerved; and the Pharisees of the Nile dreaded and avoided him, as much as the publicans and sinners loved and followed him.

One thing, only, in his conduct gave some handle for scandal, among the just persons who needed no repentance. It was well known that in his most solemn devotions, on those long nights of unceasing prayer and self-discipline, which won him a reputation for superhuman sanctity, there mingled always with his prayers the names of two women. And, when some worthy elder, taking courage from his years, dared to hint kindly to him, that such conduct caused some scandal to the weaker brethren, "It is true," answered he: "tell my brethren that I pray nightly for two women: both

of them young; both of them beautiful; both of them beloved by me more than I love my own soul; and tell them, moreover, that one of the two was a harlot, and the other a heathen." The old monk laid his hand on his mouth, and retired.

The remainder of his history it seems better to extract from an unpublished fragment of the Hagiologia Nilotica of Graidiocolosyrtus Tabenniticus, the greater part of which valuable work was destroyed at the taking of Alexandria under Amrou, A. D. 640.

"Now when the said abbot had ruled the monastery of Scetis seven years with uncommon prudence, resplendent in virtue and in miracles, it befel that one morning he was late for the Divine office. Whereon a certain ancient brother, who was also a deacon, being sent to ascertain the cause of so unwonted a defection, found the holy man extended upon the floor of his cell, like Balaam in the flesh, though far differing from him in the spirit, having fallen into a trance, but having his eyes open. Who, not daring to arouse him, sat by him until the hour of noon, judging rightly that something from heaven had befallen him. And at that hour, the saint arising without astonishment, said, 'Brother, make ready for me the divine elements, that I may consecrate them.' And he asking the reason wherefore, the saint replied, 'That I may partake thereof with all my brethren, ere I depart hence. For know assuredly that, within the seventh day, I shall migrate to the celestial mansions. For this night stood by me in a dream, those two women, whom I love, and for whom I pray; the one clothed in a white, the other in a ruby-coloured garment, and holding each other by the hand; who said to me, "'That life after death is

not such a one as you fancy: come, therefore, and behold with us what it is like." " Troubled at which words, the deacon went forth: yet on account not only of holy obedience, but also of the sanctity of the blessed abbot, did not hesitate to prepare according to his command the divine elements; which the abbot having consecrated, distributed among his brethren, reserving only a portion of the most holy bread and wine; and then, having bestowed on them all the kiss of peace, he took the paten and chalice in his hands, and went forth from the monastery towards the desert; whom the whole fraternity followed weeping, as knowing that they should see his face no more. But he, having arrived at the foot of a certain mountain, stopped, and blessing them, commanded them that they should follow him no farther, and dismissed them with these words: 'As ye have been loved, so love. As ye have been forgiven, so forgive. As ye have been judged, so judge.' And so ascending, was taken away from their eyes. Now they, returning astonished, watched three days with prayer and fasting: but at last the eldest brother, being ashamed, like Elisha before the entreaties of Elijah's disciples, sent two of the young men to seek their master.

"To whom befel a thing noteworthy and full of miracles. For ascending the same mountain where they had left the abbot, they met with a certain Moorish people, not averse to the Christian verity, who declare that certain days before a priest had passed by them, bearing a paten and chalice, and blessing them in silence, proceeded across the desert in the direction of the cave of the holy Amma.

"And they inquiring who this Amma might be,

the Moors answered that some twenty years ago there had arrived in those mountains a woman more beautiful than had ever before been seen in that region, dressed in rich garments; who after a short sojourn among their tribe, having distributed among them the jewels which she wore, had embraced the eremitic life, and sojourned upon the highest peak of a neighbouring mountain; till, her garments failing her, she became invisible to mankind, saving to a few women of the tribe, who went up from time to time to carry her offerings of fruit and meal, and to ask the blessing of her prayers. To whom she rarely appeared, veiled down to her feet in black hair of exceeding length and splendour.

"Hearing these things, the two brethren doubted for a while: but at last, determining to proceed, arrived at sunset upon the summit of the said mountain.

"Where, behold a great miracle. For above an open grave, freshly dug in the sand, a cloud of vultures and obscene birds hovered, whom two lions, fiercely contending, drove away with their talons, as if from some sacred deposit therein enshrined. Towards whom the two brethren, fortifying themselves with the sign of the holy cross, ascended. Whereupon the lions, as having fulfilled the term of their guardianship, retired, and left to the brethren a sight which they beheld with astonishment, and not without tears.

"For in the open grave lay the body of Philammon the abbot; and by his side, wrapt in his cloak, the corpse of a woman of exceeding beauty, such as the Moors had described. Whom embracing straightly, as a brother a sister, and joining his lips to hers, he had rendered up his soul to God; not without bestowing on her, as it seemed, the most holy sacra-

nent; for by the grave-side stood the paten and the halice emptied of their divine contents.

"Having beheld which things awhile in silence, hey considered that the right understanding of such natters pertained to the judgment-seat above, and vas unnecessary to be comprehended by men conse-rated to God. Whereon, filling in the grave with ll haste, they returned weeping to the Laura, and eclared to them the strange things which they had eheld, and whereof I the writer, having collected ese facts from sacrosanct and most trustworthy ouths, can only say that wisdom is justified of all er children.

"Now, before they returned, one of the brethren earching the cave wherein the holy woman dwelt, ound there neither food, furniture, or other matters; aving one bracelet of gold, of large size and strange orkmanship, engraven with foreign characters, which o one could decipher. The which bracelet, being aken home to the Laura of Scetis, and there dedicated n the chapel to the memory of the holy Amma, proved eyond all doubt the sanctity of its former possessor, y the miracles which its virtue worked; the fame hereof spreading abroad throughout the whole hebaid, drew innumerable crowds of suppliants to at holy relic. But it came to pass, after the Vandalic ersecution wherewith Huneric and Genseric the king evastated Africa, and enriched the Catholic Church ith innumerable martyrs, that certain wandering arbarians of the Vandalic race, imbued with the Arian avity, and made insolent by success, boiled over from e parts of Mauritania into the Thebaid region. Who undering and burning all monasteries, and insulting

the consecrated virgins, at last arrived even at the monastery of Scetis, where they not only, according to their impious custom, defiled the altar, and carried off the sacred vessels, but also bore away that most holy relic, the chief glory of the Laura, — namely, the bracelet of the holy Amma, impiously pretending that it had belonged to a warrior of their tribe, and thus expounding the writing thereon engraven —

For Amalric Amal's Son Smid Troll's Son Made Me.

Wherein whether they spoke truth or not, yet their sacrilege did not remain unpunished; for attempting to return homeward toward the sea by way of the Nile, they were set upon while weighed down with wine and sleep, by the country people, and to a man miserably destroyed. But the pious folk, restoring the holy gold to its pristine sanctuary, were not unrewarded: for since that day it grows glorious with ever fresh miracles — as of blind restored to sight, paralytics to strength, demoniacs to sanity — to the honour of the orthodox Catholic Church, and of its ever-blessed saints."

* * * *

So be it. Pelagia and Philammon, like the rest, went to their own place . . . to the only place where such in such days could find rest . . . to the desert and the hermit's cell, and then forward into that fairy land of legend and miracle, wherein all saintly lives were destined to be enveloped for many a century thenceforth.

And now, readers, farewell. I have shown you New Foes under an Old Face — your own likenesses in toga and tunic, instead of coat and bonnet. One word before we part. The same devil who tempted

these old Egyptians tempts you. The same God who would have saved these old Egyptians if they had willed, will save you, if you will. Their sins are yours, their errors yours, their doom yours, their deliverance yours. There is nothing new under the sun. The thing which has been, it is that which shall be. Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone, whether at Hypatia or Pelagia, Miriam or Raphael, Cyril or Philammon.

THE END.

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